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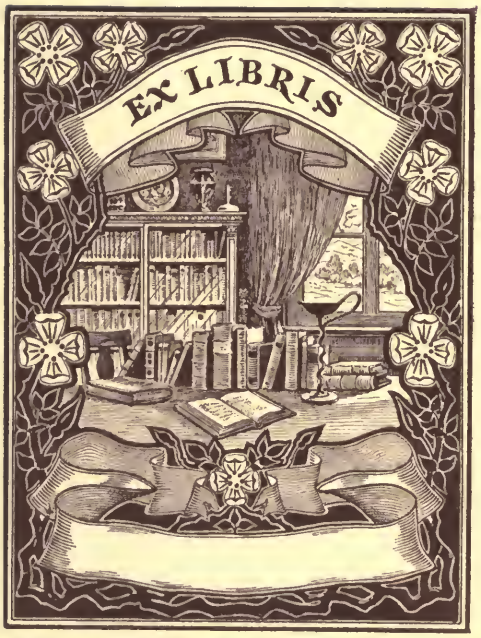
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THE WORKS
OF
ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON

CENTENARY EDITION

ILLUSTRATED

G·P·PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

Poet-Laureate Edition

The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson

With a Preface by

Elisabeth Luther Cary

Together with Various Critical Introductions

Illustrated in Photogravure from Original Designs by

Frederick Simpson Coburn

and

Gustave Doré

In Eight Volumes

(8)

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A garland for Lenora.

THE TENNYSON MEMORIAL, BEACON HILL, FRESHWATER 400

Introduction

I

By M. Forgues

"DEPRIVE his verse of its voluptuous melody, its merit of scholarly archaism, and you will already have done it irreparable harm, for Tennyson is creator only in details of style. Finder of words rather than of ideas, he borrows willingly, and without overmuch discrimination, the commonplace theme upon which he loves to spend the richness of his harmonic combinations. Whether through inability or veritable disdain, he, preoccupied chiefly with the lyric effect, hardly reveals a glimpse of the inner drama, of the human fact from which emanate, laughing or sorrowful, sympathetic or scornful and bitter, the effusions of his thought. With him the reality is confounded, amalgamated, with the dream; it takes on vague proportions, a supernatural character. Nothing precise or palpable is discoverable.

Introduction

In these Eolian poems, the women are the sylphs, the passions, the entities of the Germanic mind, mere musical abstractions; the description,—often admirable,—a mirage about to vanish.

"From time to time, it is true, English realism brings light into this vapoury chaos, and in a fashion sufficiently bizarre. The wandering will-o'-the-wisp becomes a lantern omnibus; by the side of the singing syren is heard the squawking goose, and you have hardly quitted the fanciful country, the enchanted isle of the Lotophagi, when you find yourself on a cross-road in the company of simple travellers who have come afoot to wait for the mail coach: tremendous discords which cannot fail to throw the reader's mind into some degree of embarrassment."

Among the several poems chosen by M. Forgues for translation is *The Sisters*, and it rather upsets the general idea of French sensitiveness to find him translating the third stanza with omissions. The original, he says, shows "a Shakespearian naïveté which in French is neither tolerable nor tolerated." One point that he makes is interesting: "Upon occasions," he says, "Dickens's prose and Tennyson's verse offer striking resemblances. The thoughts have an air of belonging to the same family; the very words take on an analogous physiognomy or harmony. To be convinced, compare the account in *The Old Curiosity Shop* of Nelly's funeral with the *New Year's Eve*,

or the *Dirge*, or any other elegy in which the poet is filled with the spectacle of death and burial. The comparison is in this instance the easier that Dickens has written in irregular blank verse the passage to which we refer our readers."

II

By M. Filon

"Nathaniel Hawthorne," he says, "encountering Tennyson, in 1857, at the Manchester Exhibition, tried in vain to define his impression. 'All that I can say,' he wrote to a friend, 'is that he has an un-English and at the same time not an American look.'[1]

"This phrase was striking, and came back to us as we were trying to characterise some of the features of Lord Tennyson's literary physiognomy. We are tempted to apply to the talent what has been said of the man. Certainly he has the qualities and defects of his race. He is English when he loves the fields and the sea; he is English in his scorn of the Celt, in his hatred of Rome; English in patriotism and in pride. But we believe that he will never by future historians of literature be considered a representative of the Saxon genius in the same way as Shakespeare or Dickens. Taste with his compatriots is only dis-

[1] The actual phrase is: "Un-English as he was, Tennyson had not, however, an American look."

taste. We do not despise this mental disposition; aversion to that which is unclean and unhealthy is always a safeguard and often an inspiration. But something more must be recognised in Lord Tennyson: the choice of elements, the art of composition, the science of proportion, and, throughout, the exquisite feeling for sound and form. An after-touch is an artistic effort, an erasure—with due deference to those who boast of pouring themselves forth upon paper like a torrent—is a sign of intelligence. How many after-touches and erasures in Tennyson! We could show him, for example, three times remaking that passage in *The Princess* where he has simply to bring before us three men letting themselves slip from the top of a rampart like spiders hanging from the end of their thread. This scrupulousness is an honour to the writer. The molten metal flows from a cast and is of no value; a thousand strokes of the hammer are necessary to give to the forged object its form and its price.

"As to the harmony of words, Tennyson possesses it, not as a *Parnassian*, not as a virtuoso of cæsura and rhyme, but by instinct, through genius. His verse imitates everything—the neighing and galloping of horses, the dry murmur of guitar-strings, the tearing sound of the clarion, joyous or drawling vibration, bells, echoes waning and dying, the grating sound of the wave grinding the pebbles on the strand,

all the sounds of living nature from the growl of thunder to the burring of the grasshopper. In his plays he bends to his use the alliteration of the old Saxons, at the same time borrowing from the prosody of the Greeks their scholarly flexions. Sometimes he gives richness and amplitude to his song by composite words which he brings together or unlinks at will; sometimes he originates velvety gamuts of marvellously adjusted monosyllables. Our professors have recommended to our admiration the famous line:

'Le jour n'est pas plus pur que le fond de mon cœur.'

What would they have said if some one had told them that one of the most melodious stanzas of *In Memoriam* counts in eight lines but two dissyllabic words, and fifty-eight words of one syllable without ceasing to caress the ear! Sometimes the meaning of these lines is vague. What matter! A false shame keeps us from admitting that in poetry, as in music, the charm is often in inverse ratio to the precision. Tennyson, like Mendelssohn, has his 'songs without words,' in which words are not so much intellectual signs as musical notes. It is with these vague, delicious modulations that three or four generations of young men and women have already sung lullaby to their dreams.

"If we admire the great artist, we reserve the best of our sympathy for the sincere thinker. Literary

sincerity! who troubles himself about it to-day? In criticism, to serve one's coterie or injure one's neighbour, one leans always to one side or the other; in romance, one swells, one lashes oneself into aping passion; the historian recounts the past, thinking of the present, often of the future. We leave aside political eloquence, which lives on lies. The furious search after novelty, the need of advertisement, the prejudice of systems, party spirit, scholastic servility, or fear of the rabble,—we do not undertake to say which of these causes has most contributed to the reign of falsehood; but we do state that, since Diderot, nearly all our great writers have been great liars as well. To say only what one has himself thought and felt, and nothing more: the author who will seriously abide by this plain rule will make a revolution in literature such as Descartes made in science. That is why we love the sincerity of Lord Tennyson. It makes the moral value of his work, the identity of his talent in the midst of multiple transformations; and through it, after many imitations and essays, he has conquered his originality."

From the "Revue des Deux Mondes" translated in Elisabeth Luther Cary's "Tennyson."

Becket

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

The Right Honourable Earl of Selborne

My dear Selborne,—To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.

Ever yours,

Tennyson.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).

THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*

GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London.*

ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*

Bishop of Hereford.

HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*

JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*

JOHN OF SALISBURY
HERBERT OF BOSHAM } *friends of Becket.*

WALTER MAP, *reputed author of "Golias," Latin poems against the priesthood.*

KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.

GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*

GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge.*

SIR REGINALD FITZURSE
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE } *the four knights of the king's household, enemies of Becket.*

Becket

De Broc of Saltwood Castle.
Lord Leicester.
Philip de Eleemosyna.
Two Knight Templars.
John of Oxford (*called the Swearer*).
Eleanor of Aquitaine, *Queen of England* (*divorced from Louis of France*).
Rosamund de Clifford.
Margery.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

Becket

PROLOGUE

A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows.

Henry *and* Becket *at chess.*

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I 'll have them written down and made the law.

BECKET. My liege, I move my bishop.

HENRY. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.

BECKET. Look to your king.

HENRY. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.

BECKET. Well—will you move?

HENRY. There. [*Moves.*

BECKET. Check—you move so wildly.

HENRY. There then! [*Moves.*

BECKET. Why—there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.

HENRY (*kicks over the board*). Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.
I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.

BECKET. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

HENRY. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

BECKET. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound
By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek
The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?

HENRY. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

BECKET. How should I know?

HENRY. That is my secret, Thomas.

BECKET. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

HENRY. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.

BECKET. Saint Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

HENRY. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!
Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,
A dish-designer, and most amorous
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine.
Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

BECKET. That palate is insane which cannot tell
A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

HENRY. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

BECKET. So I do.
Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;
And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,
The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers
Are all the fairer.

HENRY. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

BECKET. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd
Off from the game.

HENRY. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and worried it.

BECKET. No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!

HENRY. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe thee
The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,
Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed
As a woman should be loved—Why dost thou smile
So dolorously?

BECKET. My good liege, if a man
Wastes himself among women how should he love
A woman as a woman should be loved?
HENRY. How shouldst thou know that never hast
loved one?
Come, I would give her to thy care in England
When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.
BECKET. My lord, I am your subject, not your—
HENRY. Pander.
God's eyes! I know all that—not my purveyor
Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.
I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,
A nest in a bush.
BECKET. And where, my liege?
HENRY (*whispers*). Thine ear.
BECKET. That 's lone enough.
HENRY (*laying paper on table*). This chart here
mark'd "*Her Bower*,"
Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,
A hundred pathways running everyway,
And then a brook, a bridge; and after that
This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line—
The rest you see is colour'd green—but this
Draws thro' the chart to her.
BECKET. This blood-red line?

HENRY. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

BECKET. And where is she? There in her English nest?

HENRY. Would God she were!—no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou
And pass her to her secret bower in England.
She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

BECKET. My liege, I pray thee let me hence; a widow
And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons—

HENRY. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

BECKET. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

HENRY. Whatever come between us?

BECKET. What should come
Between us, Henry?

HENRY. Nay—I know not, Thomas.

BECKET. What need then? Well—whatever come between us. [*Going.*

HENRY. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard
To raise that tempest which will set it trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son
Of Holy Church—no croucher to the Gregories
That tread the kings their children under-heel—
Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while
This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,
Will need my help—be facile to my hands.
Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes
And fulminations from the side of Rome,
An interdict on England—I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I 'll have it done—and now.

BECKET. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'
I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

HENRY. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

BECKET. The next Canterbury.

HENRY. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

BECKET. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

HENRY (*lays his hand on* BECKET'S *shoulder*). Here!

BECKET. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?

HENRY. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

BECKET. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

HENRY. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—
A man of this world and the next to boot.

BECKET. There 's Gilbert Foliot.

HENRY. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.

BECKET. Roger of York.

HENRY. Roger is Roger of York;
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.

BECKET. Henry of Winchester?

HENRY. Him who crown'd Stephen—
King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.
And I 'll have no more Anselms.

BECKET. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me; let me go.

HENRY. Answer me first.

BECKET. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—
Nolo episcopari.

HENRY. Ay, but *Nolo*

Archiepiscopari, my good friend,
Is quite another matter.

BECKET. A more awful one.
Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!
God's favour and King's favour might so clash
That thou and I—That were a jest indeed!

HENRY. Thou angerest me, man; I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR *and* SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.

ELEANOR (*singing*).

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done—

HENRY (*to* BECKET, *who is going*). Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

ELEANOR (*seeing chart on table*). This chart with red line! her bower! whose bower?

HENRY. The chart is not mine, but Becket's; take it, Thomas.

ELEANOR. Becket! O,—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

HENRY. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

ELEANOR. What matters? State matters? love matters?

HENRY. My love for thee, and thine for me.

ELEANOR.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your North chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and underhandedness.

And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out

of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

BECKET. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

ELEANOR. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France: and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honey-moon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

HENRY. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

ELEANOR. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there.

[*Gives it to him.*

HENRY (*puts it on*). On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

ELEANOR. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme—

HENRY. That the heart were lost in the rhyme,

and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

ELEANOR. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

HENRY. There 's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

HERBERT. My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

HENRY. Peace to his soul!

HERBERT. I left him with peace on his face,—that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

HENRY. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

BECKET. My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

HENRY. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[*Leaps over the table, and exit.*

BECKET. He did prefer me to the chancellorship,

Believing I should ever aid the Church—
But have I done it? He commends me now
From out his grave to this archbishopric.

HERBERT. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

BECKET. *His* should. Come with me. Let me learn at full
The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt* HERBERT *and* BECKET.

ELEANOR. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

FITZURSE. Rosamund's?

ELEANOR. Ay—there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

FITZURSE. To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him!

ELEANOR. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

FITZURSE. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royalling royalty? Besides, he holp the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

ELEANOR. For the which I honour him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great and sound policy

that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

FITZURSE. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

ELEANOR. Pride of the plebeian!

FITZURSE. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

ELEANOR. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

FITZURSE. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

ELEANOR. Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup 's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival! —ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and*

he starts). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

FITZURSE. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

ELEANOR. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

FITZURSE. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

ELEANOR. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

FITZURSE. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

ELEANOR. Us!

FITZURSE. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were

more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

ELEANOR. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me.

FITZURSE. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

ELEANOR. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

SCENE I.—Becket's House in London.

Chamber barely furnished. Becket *unrobing.* Herbert of Bosham *and* Servant.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.
Leave me with Herbert, friend. [*Exit* Servant.
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we passed
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

HERBERT. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

BECKET. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

HERBERT. Not heavier than thine armour at Toulouse?

BECKET. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

HERBERT. To please the King?

BECKET. Ay, and the King of kings,
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.
But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot
That I am not the man to be your primate,
For Henry could not work a miracle—
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

HERBERT. Ay,
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

BECKET. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven
Into her bosom.

HERBERT. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making.

BECKET. And when I was a child,

The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise. Dream,
Or prophecy, that?

HERBERT. Well, dream and prophecy both.

BECKET. And when I was of Theobald's household, once—
The good old man would sometimes have his jest—
He took his mitre off, and set it on me,
And said, "My young archbishop—thou wouldst make
A stately archbishop!" Jest or prophecy there?

HERBERT. Both, Thomas, both.

BECKET. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept
Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said, "O Lord,
I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,
And secular splendours and a favourer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.
Am *I* the man?" And the Lord answer'd me,
"Thou art the man, and all the more the man."
And then I asked again, "O Lord my God,
Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
For this thy great archbishopric, believing
That I should go against the Church with him,
And I shall go against him with the Church,

And I have said no word of this to him.
Am *I* the man?" And the Lord answer'd me,
"Thou art the man, and all the more the man."
And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me
And smote me down upon the minster floor.
I fell.

HERBERT. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall!

BECKET. I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me? What?
Shall I fall off—to please the King once more?
Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the King—
My truest and mine utmost for the Church?

HERBERT. Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;
For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,
Save from the throne of thine archbishopric?
And how been made archbishop hadst thou told him,
"I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,
Against the King"?

BECKET. But dost thou think the King
Forced mine election?

HERBERT. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why not?
Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?
Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou
A mightier Anselm.

BECKET. I do believe thee, then. I am the man.
And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the King.
I served our Theobald well when I was with
him;
I served King Henry well as Chancellor;
I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.
This Canterbury is only less than Rome,
And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury—
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'
The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt
Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
And goodly acres—we will make her whole;
Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs
These ancient Royal customs—they *are* Royal,
Not of the Church—and let them be anathema.
And all that speak for them anathema.

HERBERT. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

BECKET. O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief
To show the scar for ever—his, a hate
Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, *flying from* SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. *Drops her veil.*

BECKET. Rosamund de Clifford!

ROSAMUND. Save me, father, hide me—they follow me—and I must not be known.

BECKET. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt* ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT *by side door.*

Enter FITZURSE.

FITZURSE. The archbishop!

BECKET. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

FITZURSE. Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one—

BECKET. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

FITZURSE. It much imports me I should know her name.

BECKET. What her?

FITZURSE. The woman that I follow'd hither.

BECKET. Perhaps it may import her all as much
Not to be known.

FITZURSE. And what care I for that?
Come, come, my lord archbishop; I saw that door
Close even now upon the woman.

BECKET. Well?

FITZURSE (*making for the door*). Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

BECKET. Back, man!

FITZURSE. Then tell me who and what she is.

BECKET. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

FITZURSE (*making to the door*). I must and will.
I care not for thy new archbishopric.

BECKET. Back, man, I tell thee! What!
Shall I forget my new archbishopric
And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?
'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

FITZURSE. It well befits thy new archbishopric
To take the vagabond woman of the street
Into thine arms!

BECKET. O drunken ribaldry!
Out, beast! out, bear!

FITZURSE. I shall remember this.

BECKET. Do, and begone! [*Exit* FITZURSE.
[*Going to the door, sees* DE TRACY.
Tracy, what dost thou here?

DE TRACY. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

BECKET. Follow him out!

DE TRACY. I shall remember this
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*

BECKET. Do. These be those baron-brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
Rosamund de Clifford!

Re-enter ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT.

ROSAMUND. Here am I.

BECKET. Why here?
We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.
Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?
ROSAMUND. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,
They say that you are wise in winged things,
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird
From following the fled summer—a chink—he 's out,
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath
Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought
"Lo! I must out or die."
BECKET. Or out *and* die.
And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?
ROSAMUND. Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.
He found me once alone. Nay—nay—I cannot
Tell you. My father drove him and his friends,
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.
I was but fourteen and an April then.
I heard him swear revenge.
BECKET. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?
ROSAMUND. I have saved many of 'em. You catch 'em, so,

Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within*-door.
BECKET. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once. The child
Is there already.
ROSAMUND. Yes—the child—the child—
O, rare, a whole long day of open field!
BECKET. Ay, but you go disguised.
ROSAMUND. O, rare again!
We 'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?
I 'll go as a nun.
BECKET. No.
ROSAMUND. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?
BECKET. Dan John with a nun,
That Map and these new railers at the Church
May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!
No!
Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good-night! good-night!
ROSAMUND. Father, I am so tender to all hardness!
Nay, father, first thy blessing.
BECKET. Wedded?
ROSAMUND. Father!
BECKET. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

ROSAMUND. O holy father, when thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.
BECKET. What friend?
ROSAMUND. The King.
BECKET. Herbert, take out a score of armed men
To guard this bird of passage to her cage;
And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.
[*Exeunt* HERBERT *and* ROSAMUND.
Poor soul! poor soul!
My friend, the King!—O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend, the King of England—
We long have wrought together, thou and I—
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.
We are friends no more; he will say that, not I.
The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love. Can I be under him
As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?
Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
That hath climb'd up to nobler company.
Not slighted—all but moan'd for. Thou must go.
I have not dishonour'd thee—I trust I have not—
Not mangled justice. May the hand that next
Inherits thee be but as true to thee

As mine hath been! O, my dear friend, the King!
O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.
I am martyr in myself already.—Herbert!

HERBERT (*re-entering*). My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon
Divides the whole long street with light and shade.
No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

BECKET. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,
Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral
Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.

HERBERT. Must that be?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.
Think on it again.

BECKET. Against the moral excess
No physical ache, but failure it may be
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,
And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.
I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it.—John, and out of breath!

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,

Nor am I happy having charge of her—
The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower and her Acrisius—where to seek?
I have been about the city.

BECKET. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—
To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.
Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good-night!

SCENE II.—STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS *and* BECKET'S RETAINERS *fighting.* *Enter* ELEANOR *and* BECKET *from opposite streets.*

ELEANOR. Peace, fools!

BECKET. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

RETAINER OF BECKET. They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—
Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,
With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

RETAINER OF ELEANOR. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this
In passing to the Castle even now.

RETAINER OF BECKET. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,
However kings and queens may frown on thee.

BECKET TO HIS RETAINERS. Go, go—no more of this!

ELEANOR TO HER RETAINERS. Away!—(*Exeunt* RETAINERS.) Fitzurse—

BECKET. Nay, let him be.

ELEANOR. No, no, my lord archbishop,
'T is known you are midwinter to all women,
But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.

BECKET. No, not these follies!

ELEANOR. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

BECKET. Whom?

ELEANOR. Well—you know—the minion, Rosamund.

BECKET. He had good eyes!

ELEANOR. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury,
And heard her cry, "Where is this bower of mine?"

BECKET. Good ears too!

ELEANOR. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs?

BECKET. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.

ELEANOR. I and mine—

And many a baron holds along with me—
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the customs—
So that you grant me one slight favour.

BECKET. What?

ELEANOR. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you
With the red line—"her bower."

BECKET. And to what end?

ELEANOR. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful priest
Sits winking at the licence of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous
The Church must play into the hands of kings;
Look! I would move this wanton from his sight
And take the Church's danger on myself.

BECKET. For which she should be duly grateful.

ELEANOR. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

BECKET. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

ELEANOR. And queens, also!
What is your drift?

BECKET. My drift is to the Castle,
Where I shall meet the barons and my King. [*Exit.*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

ELEANOR. To the Castle?

De Broc. Ay!

Eleanor. Stir up the King, the lords!
Set all on fire against him!

De Brito. Ay, good Madam!

[*Exeunt.*

Eleanor. Fool! I will make thee hateful to thy King.
Churl! I will have thee frighted into France,
And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

SCENE III.—The Hall in Northampton Castle

On one side of the stage the doors of an inner Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of the Hall. Roger Archbishop of York, Foliot Bishop of London, Hilary of Chichester, Bishop of Hereford, Richard de Hastings (*Grand Prior of Templars*), Philip de Eleemosyna (*the Pope's Almoner*), *and others.* De Broc, Fitzurse, De Brito, De Morville, De Tracy, *and other* Barons *assembled—a table before them.* John of Oxford, *President of the Council.*

Enter Becket *and* Herbert of Bosham.

Becket. Where is the King?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on the Nene,
His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd
These ancient laws and customs of the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him;
He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
Take heed lest he destroy thee utterly.

BECKET. Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.

ROGER OF YORK. Didst thou not promise Henry to obey
These ancient laws and customs of the realm?

BECKET. Saving the honour of my order—ay.
Customs, traditions,—clouds that come and go;
The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

ROGER OF YORK. Saving thine order! But King Henry sware
That, saving his King's kingship, he would grant thee
The crown itself. Saving thine order, Thomas,
Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.
O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,
Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting for it,
And bring us all to shame?

BECKET. Roger of York,
When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,
Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
Exile me from the face of Theobald.
Now I am Canterbury, and thou art York.

ROGER OF YORK. And is not York the peer of Canterbury?
Did not Great Gregory bid Saint Austin here
Found two archbishoprics, London and York?

BECKET. What came of that? The first archbishop fled,
And York lay barren for a hundred years.
Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the pall
For London too.

FOLIOT. And with good reason too,
For London had a temple and a priest
When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

BECKET. The pagan temple of a pagan Rome!
The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed!
Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy!
Who made thee London? Who, but Canterbury?

JOHN OF OXFORD. Peace, peace, my lords! these customs are no longer
As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,
But by the King's command are written down,
And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,
The President of this Council, read them.

BECKET. Read!

JOHN OF OXFORD (*reads*). "All causes of advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, shall be tried in the King's court."

BECKET. But that I cannot sign; for that would drag
The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,
And on a matter wholly spiritual.

JOHN OF OXFORD. "If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; but he shall

answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein."

BECKET. And that I cannot sign.
Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?
Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound
Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

JOHN OF OXFORD. "When a bishopric falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof."

BECKET. And that I cannot sign. Is the King's treasury
A fit place for the moneys of the Church,
That be the patrimony of the poor?

JOHN OF OXFORD. "And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government."

BECKET. And that I cannot sign; for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

FOLIOT. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father?

BECKET. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

FOLIOT. Nay; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the licence of our lord the King.

BECKET. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash of swords.*

Sign and obey!

BECKET. My lords, is this a combat or a council?
Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs
Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,
But that there be among you those that hold
Lands reft from Canterbury.

DE BROC. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

LORDS (*shouting*). Sign, and obey the crown!

BECKET. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave
Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;
So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,
When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown should be

Shorn of ancestral splendour. This did Henry.
Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

DE BROC. And mean to hold it, or—

BECKET. To have my life.

DE BROC. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

BECKET. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;
Strike, and ye set these customs by my death
Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

HERBERT. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like
To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

JOHN OF OXFORD. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

DE BROC. Why, down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!

[*Sheathing his sword.*

HILARY. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.
Save the King's honour here before his barons.
He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns
The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,
That were but as the shadow of an assent.

BECKET. 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honour for the Pope our master,
Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.
Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify
Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Antipope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.
Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.
Smoothe thou his pride—thy signing is but form;
Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope
Will be to blame—not thou. Over and over
He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,
Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,
And Earth should get the better—for the time.
Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

BECKET. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA. Orders, my lord—why, no; for what am I?
The secret whisper of the Holy Father.

Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always
Blurt thy free mind to the air?

BECKET. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

PHILIP. Take it not that way—balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,
He heads the Church against the King with thee.

RICHARD DE HASTINGS (*kneeling*). Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;
I knew thy father; he would be mine age
Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!
Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.
Submit; I promise thee on my salvation
That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

BECKET. What!
Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

ANOTHER TEMPLAR (*kneeling*). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

PHILIP. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?
Dost thou not hear?

BECKET (*signs*). Why—there then—there—I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.

FOLIOT. Is it thy will,
My lord archbishop, that we too should sign?

BECKET. O, ay, by that canonical obedience
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.
FOLIOT. Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop?
BECKET. O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.
[BECKET *draws apart with* HERBERT.
Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?
I 'll have the paper back—blot out my name.
HERBERT. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.
BECKET. False to myself—it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself!
This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.
And Rome is venal even to rottenness.
I see it, I see it.
I am no soldier, as he said—at least
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope
I will suspend myself from all my functions.
If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge—
FOLIOT (*from the table*). My lord archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.
BECKET. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*
What, this! and this!—what! new and old together!
Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,

And bade me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematise him. I will not seal.

[*Exit with* HERBERT.

Enter KING HENRY.

HENRY. Where 's Thomas? hath he signed? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How 's that?

JOHN OF OXFORD. He would not seal.
And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red—
Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there
And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,
Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept
Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,
"False to myself! It is the will of God!"

HENRY. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—
Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
I 'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.

[*Sits on his throne.*

Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—
A reign which was no reign, when none could sit
By his own hearth in peace; when murder common
As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd
All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,
Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;

When every baron ground his blade in blood;
The household dough was kneaded up with blood;
The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plough
Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
Till famine dwarft the race—I came, your King!
Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,
In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears
The flatteries of corruption—went abroad
Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;
Yea, heard the churl against the baron—yea,
And did him justice; sat in mine own courts
Judging my judges that had found a King
Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,
And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
From madness. And the event—our fallows till'd,
Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
Bishops—York, London, Chichester, Westminster—
Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;
But since your canon will not let you take
Life for a life, ye but degraded him
Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder
care
For degradation? and that made me muse,
Being bounden by my coronation oath

To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!
Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him—
Not death for death.

JOHN OF OXFORD. But I, my liege, could swear,
To death for death.

HENRY. And, looking thro' my reign,
I found a hundred ghastly murders done
By men, the scum and offal of the Church;
Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages,
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs—had them written fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.

JOHN OF OXFORD. And I can easily swear to these as being
The King's will and God's will and justice; yet
I could but read a part to-day, because—

FITZURSE. Because my lord of Canterbury—

DE TRACY. Ay,
This lord of Canterbury—

DE BRITO. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights
Are mooted in our councils—

FITZURSE. —made an uproar.

HENRY. And Becket had my bosom on all this;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness—
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,

I made him porcelain from the clay of the city—
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,
Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,
Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side—
But no!
The bird that moults sings the same song again,
The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.
Snake—ay, but he that lookt a fangless one
Issues a venomous adder.
For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's robe—
Flung the Great Seal of England in my face—
Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury—
My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,
The master of his master, the King's king.—
God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.
Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd
All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor say?
False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!
The will of God—why, then it is my will—
Is he coming?

MESSENGER (*entering*). With a crowd of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,
As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

HENRY. His cross!

ROGER OF YORK. His cross! I 'll front him, cross to cross. [*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.

HENRY. His cross! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his King!
It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his* BARONS *to the Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The* BISHOPS *come round him.*

HEREFORD. The King will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.

BECKET. No; it must protect me.

HERBERT. As once he bore the standard of the Angles,
So now he bears the standard of the angels.

FOLIOT. I am the dean of the province; let me bear it.
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

BECKET. Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

Enter Roger of York, *with his cross, advancing to* Becket.

Becket. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?
If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

Foliot (*seizing hold of* Becket's *cross*). Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.
Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket. Away!
[*Flinging him off.*

Foliot. *He* fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!
He fast! is that an arm of fast? My lord,
Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;
But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,
And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.
As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as archbishop goest against the King;
For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.
Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

Becket. Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,
Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,
A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear
Under what Prince I fight.

FOLIOT. My lord of York,
Let us go in to the Council, where our bishops
And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

BECKET. Sons sit in judgment on their father!—then
The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves—
Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal? I promised
The King to obey these customs, not yet written,
Saving mine order; true, too, that when written
I sign'd them—being a fool, as Foliot call'd me.
I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* HEREFORD, FOLIOT, *and other* BISHOPS.

ROGER OF YORK. The Church will hate thee.

[*Exit.*

BECKET. Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;
Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

HERBERT. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.
Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them all!

HEREFORD (*re-entering*). I cannot brook the turmoil thou hast raised.
I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,
Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,
Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury
To our King's hands again, and be at peace.
HILARY (*re-entering*). For hath not thine ambition set the Church
This day between the hammer and the anvil—
Fealty to the King, obedience to thyself?
HERBERT. What say the bishops?
HILARY. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages—most are with the King;
And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,
And to the wind another. But we hold
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn archbishop
Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves
Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,
And cite thee to appear before the Pope,
And answer thine accusers.—Art thou deaf?
BECKET. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*
HILARY. Dost thou hear those others?
BECKET. Ay!
ROGER OF YORK (*re-entering*). The King's "God's eyes!" come now so thick and fast
We fear that he may reave thee of thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud archbishop mutilated.
Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

BECKET. So be it. He begins at top with me;
They crucified Saint Peter downward.

ROGER OF YORK. Nay,
But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine
Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

BECKET. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.

FITZURSE (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,
Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye
When thou thereof wast warden.

BECKET. Tell the King
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

DE TRACY (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks,
Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the King.

BECKET. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

DE BRITO (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,
Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,
For which the King was bound security.

BECKET. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (*followed by* BARONS *and* BISHOPS.)

LEICESTER. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King
Demands a strict account of all those revenues
From all the vacant sees and abbacies,
Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

BECKET. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

LEICESTER. Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.

BECKET. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,
The King and I were brothers. All I had
I lavish'd for the glory of the King;
I shone from him, for him, his glory, his
Reflection. Now the glory of the Church
Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;
I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day
To ponder these demands.

LEICESTER. Hear first thy sentence!
The King and all his lords—

BECKET. Son, first hear *me!*

LEICESTER. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates
In fee and barony of the King, decline
The judgment of the King?

BECKET. The King! I hold
Nothing in fee and barony of the King.
Whatever the Church owns—she holds it in
Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to
One earthly sceptre.

LEICESTER. Nay, but hear thy judgment.
The King and all his barons—

BECKET. Judgment! Barons!
Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he
That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.
I had been so true
To Henry and mine office that the King
Would throne me in the great archbishopric;
And I, that knew mine own infirmity,
For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause
Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of him.
Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,
And the King too.
What! forty thousand marks!
Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,
Know that when made archbishop I was freed,
Before the Prince and chief Justiciary,
From every bond and debt and obligation
Incurr'd as Chancellor.
Hear me, son. As gold
Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,

The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,
I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,
That thou obey, not me, but God in me,
Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,
By whom I will be judged; refer myself
The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,
And under his authority—I depart. [*Going.*

[LEICESTER *looks at him doubtingly.*

Am I a prisoner?

LEICESTER. By Saint Lazarus, no!
I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

DE BROC. In peace now—but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

DE BRITO, FITZURSE, DE TRACY, AND OTHERS (*flinging wisps of rushes*). Ay, go in peace, caitiff caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate—and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

BECKET. Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*

HERBERT. Enough, my lord, enough!

BECKET. Barons of England and of Normandy,
When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,
True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.
But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,
Sir Engelram de Trie,—

HERBERT. Enough, my lord.

BECKET. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD.

HERALD. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your archbishop.

FOLIOT. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV.—REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON

A Banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

FIRST RETAINER. Do thou speak first.

SECOND RETAINER. Nay, thou! Nay, thou!
Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

FIRST RETAINER. My lord archbishop, wilt thou permit us—

BECKET. To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

FIRST RETAINER. My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

BECKET. When?

FIRST RETAINER. Now.

BECKET. To-night?

FIRST RETAINER. To-night, my lord.

BECKET. And why?

FIRST RETAINER. My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

BECKET. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

FIRST RETAINER. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

BECKET. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

FIRST RETAINER. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

BECKET. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

FIRST RETAINER. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, "God bless you," ere we go?

BECKET. God bless you all! God redden your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to heaven, my "God bless you," that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

FIRST RETAINER. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt* RETAINERS.

BECKET. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they

leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night? [*Knocking at the door.*

ATTENDANT. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

BECKET. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's; they write marvellously alike. [*Reading.*

"Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France; there be those about our King who would have thy blood."

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

ATTENDANT. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

BECKET. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

HERBERT. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

BECKET. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor

rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus.

[*Exit* HERBERT.

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar, Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

A POOR MAN (*entering with his dog.*) My lord archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

BECKET. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child —they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (*and seat themselves at the Tables*). BECKET *and* HERBERT *wait upon them.*

FIRST BEGGAR. Swine, sheep, ox—here 's a French supper! When thieves fall out, honest men—

SECOND BEGGAR. Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

FIRST BEGGAR. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

SECOND BEGGAR. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

FIRST BEGGAR. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket 's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop.

BECKET. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A VOICE. Becket, beware of the knife!

BECKET. Who spoke?

THIRD BEGGAR. Nobody, my lord. What 's that, my lord?

BECKET. Venison.

THIRD BEGGAR. Venison?

BECKET. Buck—deer, as you call it.

THIRD BEGGAR. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

BECKET. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me

whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with* HERBERT.

THIRD BEGGAR. Here—all of you—my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well—if that is n't goodly wine—

FIRST BEGGAR. Then there is n't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

THIRD BEGGAR. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb,
"The miller 's away for to-night."
"Black sheep," quoth she, "too black a sin for me."

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

"We can make a black sin white."

THIRD BEGGAR. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

"Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam."
But the miller came home that night,
And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,
That he made the black sheep white.

THIRD BEGGAR. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not

in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

FITZURSE. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

THIRD BEGGAR. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

FITZURSE. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

THIRD BEGGAR (*rising and advancing*). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

FITZURSE. Where is he? where is he?

THIRD BEGGAR. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

FITZURSE. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four* KNIGHTS *cross their swords.*

DE BRITO. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the* BEGGARS *rise and advance upon them.*

FITZURSE. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

THIRD BEGGAR. Nay, my lord, let *us* pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord,

and though we be fifty to four, we dare n't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I have n't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[FITZURSE *shrinks from him, and another presses upon* DE BRITO.

DE BRITO. Away, dog!

FOURTH BEGGAR. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

DE BRITO. Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

DE MORVILLE. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

DE BRITO. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

FIFTH BEGGAR. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

SIXTH BEGGAR. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It 's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my

lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back*, Beggars *following*.

Seventh Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

Eighth Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the* Knights *till they disappear thro' the door.*

Third Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

First Beggar. I 'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (*entering*). My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

Third Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant

thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! *Vive le Roy!* That 's the English of it.

ACT II

SCENE 1.—Rosamund's Bower

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.

Voices *heard singing among the trees.*

Duet.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
   One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.

1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he,
   Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

Enter HENRY *and* ROSAMUND.

ROSAMUND. Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.

HENRY. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—
Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this
For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest "Becket, Becket,"—
Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,
Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace
With "Becket."

ROSAMUND. O my life's life, not to smile
Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!
Let there not be one frown in this one hour.
Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Look rather thou all-royal as when first
I met thee.

HENRY. Where was that?

ROSAMUND. Forgetting that
Forgets me too.

HENRY. Nay, I remember it well.
There on the moors.
ROSAMUND. And in a narrow path.
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,
Like sudden night in the main glare of day.
And from that height something was said to me,
I knew not what.
HENRY. I ask'd the way.
ROSAMUND. I think so.
So I lost mine.
HENRY. Thou wast too shamed to answer.
ROSAMUND. Too scared—so young!
HENRY. The rosebud of my rose!—
Well, well, no more of *him*—I have sent his folk,
His kin, all his belongings, over-seas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all
By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—
So that the fool King Louis feed them not.
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.
ROSAMUND. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, sire?
HENRY. And I have been as royal with the Church.
He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,
There wore his time studying the canon law
To work it against me. But since he cursed
My friends at Veselay, I have let them know

That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

ROSAMUND. And is that altogether royal?

HENRY. Traitress!

ROSAMUND. A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

HENRY. Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will,
Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;
And round and round again. What matters? Royal—
I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

ROSAMUND. Still—thy fame too;
I say that should be royal.

HENRY. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.

ROSAMUND. And I say,
I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,
Makes "care not"—care. There have I spoken true?

HENRY. Care dwell with me for ever when I cease
To care for thee as ever!

ROSAMUND. No need! no need! . . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?— My bank
Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*

HENRY. I bade them clear
A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these country-folk at court.
ROSAMUND. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here. I love them
More than the garden flowers, that seem at most
Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking
The language of the land. I love *them* too,
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—
Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name!—
This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay, I shall not
prick myself—
Is sweetest. Do but smell!
HENRY. Thou rose of the world!
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*
I am not worthy of her—this beast-body
That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking
The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long
Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream
Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her side,
Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop
The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass
The faithful face of heaven—
[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*
—thine! thine!
ROSAMUND. I know it.
HENRY (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one
bond, her hate of Becket.

ROSAMUND (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? *I* hate Becket?

HENRY (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul
Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
A bastard hate born of a former love.

ROSAMUND. My fault to name him! O, let the hand of one
To whom thy voice is all her music stay it
But for a breath!

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*

Speak only of thy love.
Why, there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—
The happy boldness of this hand hath won it
Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)—Sacred! I 'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,
There may be crosses in my line of life.

HENRY. Not half *her* hand—no hand to mate with *her*,
If it should come to that.

ROSAMUND. With her? with whom?

HENRY. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;
Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers
[*Muttering.*
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web—
ROSAMUND (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun—out of the eclipse
Narrowing my golden hour!
HENRY. O Rosamund,
I would be true—would tell thee all—and something
I had to say—I love thee none the less—
Which will so vex thee.
ROSAMUND. Something against *me?*
HENRY. No, no, against myself.
ROSAMUND. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.
I 'll call thee little Geoffrey.
HENRY. Call him!
ROSAMUND. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

HENRY. How the boy grows!
ROSAMUND. Ay, and his brows are thine;
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.
GEOFFREY. My liege, what hast thou brought me?
HENRY. Venal imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?
GEOFFREY. O, yes, my liege.

HENRY. "O, yes, my liege!" He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?

GEOFFREY. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it me.

HENRY. It is, my boy, to side with the King when Chancellor, and then to be made archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.

GEOFFREY. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.

HENRY (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any way and play with as thou wilt—which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.
A pretty lusty boy.

ROSAMUND. So like to thee;
Like to be liker.

HENRY. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

ROSAMUND. Thou art manlike perfect.

HENRY. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,
Thou 'dst say as much—the goodly way of women
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I
Am gone!

ROSAMUND. Is *he* thy enemy?

HENRY. He? who? ay!

ROSAMUND. Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.

HENRY. And I could tear him asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!
More like is he to excommunicate me.

ROSAMUND. And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand
Before he flash'd the bolt.

HENRY. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

ROSAMUND. Ay, but he will not.

HENRY. Ay! but if he did?

ROSAMUND. O, then! O, then! I almost fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate
His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.

HENRY (*raising* ROSAMUND *and kissing her*). My brave-hearted Rose!
Hath he ever been to see thee?

ROSAMUND. Here? not he.
And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

HENRY. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

ROSAMUND. Besides, we came away in such a heat,
I brought not even my crucifix.

HENRY. Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which* ELEANOR *gave him.*

ROSAMUND. O, beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine
Be mine again?

HENRY (*throwing it around her neck*). Thine—as I am—till death!

ROSAMUND. Death? no! I 'll have it with me in my shroud,
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

HENRY. Nay—I must go; but when thou layest thy lip
To this, remembering One who died for thee,
Remember also one who lives for thee
Out there in France; for I must hence to brave
The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

ROSAMUND (*kneeling*). O, by thy love for me, all mine for thee,
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell!
I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.

HENRY. Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost
His ball into the brook! makes after it too
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

ROSAMUND. Geoffrey! Geoffrey! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Montmirail

"The Meeting of the Kings." John of Oxford *and* Henry. *Crowd in the distance.*

John of Oxford. You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.
I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,
As if he wore the crown already—No,
We will not have him crown'd.
'T is true what Becket told me, that the mother
Would make him play his kingship against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him crown'd?

Henry. Not now—not yet! and Becket—
Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all;
But, since we would be lord of our own manor,
This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,
Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again
To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There 's York, my liege.

Henry. But England scarce would hold
Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,
And that would stilt up York to twice himself.
There is a movement yonder in the crowd—

See if our pious—what shall I call him, John?—
Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,
Be yet within the field.

JOHN OF OXFORD. I will. [*Exit.*

HENRY. Ay! Ay!
Mince and go back! his politic Holiness
Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,
And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing
Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-free
To blast my realms with excommunication
And interdict. I must patch up a peace—
A peace in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn
Quarrel of Crown and Church—to rend again.
His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,
Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me
For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter LOUIS.

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

LOUIS. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope, between
The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game
For men to play with God.

HENRY. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

LOUIS. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove
True wife to you. You have had the better of us
In secular matters.

HENRY. Come, confess, good brother,
You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.
Only the golden Leopard printed in it
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again
Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene
This conference but to babble of our wives?
They are plagues enough in-door.

LOUIS. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our mail,
And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.
We never hounded on the State at home
To spoil the Church.

HENRY. How should you see this rightly?

LOUIS. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my "Monk-King,"
Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy Church
May rock, but will not wreck, nor our archbishop
Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea
Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you
For aught you wrought against us.

[HENRY *holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do much
To rake out all old dying heats if you,
At my requesting, will but look into

The wrongs you did him, and restore his kin,
Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

HENRY. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport together.
Co-kings we were, and made the laws together.
The world had never seen the like before.
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.
Well, well, we will be gentle with him, gracious—
Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, *after him,* JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROC, FITZURSE, *etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly king,
The word should come from him.

BECKET (*kneeling*). Then my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

HENRY. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

BECKET (*rising*). Saving God's honour!

HENRY. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the devil's honour, his yes and no.
Knights, bishops, earls, this London spawn—by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussulman—
Less clashing with their priests—

I am half-way down the slope—will no man stay
me?
I dash myself to pieces—I stay myself—
Puff—it is gone. You, Master Becket, you
That owe to me your power over me—
Nay, nay—
Brother of France, you have taken, cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own church by night,
No man pursuing. I would have had him back.
Take heed he do not turn and rend you too:
For whatsoever may displease him—that
Is clean against God's honour—a shift, a trick
Whereby to challenge, face me out of all
My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none may dream
I go against God's honour—ay, or himself
In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest heads from England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and Anjou;
Let these decide on what was customary
In olden days, and all the Church of France
Decide on their decision, I am content.
More, what the mightiest and the holiest
Of all his predecessors may have done
Even to the least and meanest of my own,
Let him do the same to me—I am content.

LOUIS. Ay, ay! the King humbles himself enough.

BECKET (*aside*). Words! he will wriggle out of them
like an eel

When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to those
That went before us for their work, which we
Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet—

Louis. My lord, will you be greater than the Saints,
More than Saint Peter? whom—what is it you doubt?
Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly clear
The deadly growths of earth, which hell's own heat
So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd heaven.
Yet they did much. Would God they had torn up all
By the hard root, which shoots again; our trial
Had so been less; but, seeing they were men
Defective or excessive, must we follow
All that they overdid or underdid?
Nay, if they were defective as Saint Peter
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.
O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honour for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!
No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.
But for your Christian, look you, you shall have
None other God but me—me, Thomas, son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!
I hear no more. [*Exit.*

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My lord,
We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother
Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd peace.
You will have war; and tho' we grant the Church
King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,
We that are kings are something in this world,
And so we pray you, draw yourself from under
The wings of France. We shelter you no more. [*Exit.*

John of Oxford. I am glad that France hath scouted him at last.
I told the Pope what manner of man he was.
[*Exit.*

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either realm,
Let either cast him away like a dead dog! [*Exit.*

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,
And let another take his bishopric! [*Exit.*

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.
I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*

Fitzurse. When you will.
[*Exit.*

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,
And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs
That hold our Saltwood Castle from our see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them
That sow this hate between my lord and me!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD. Blessed be the lord archbishop, who hath withstood two kings to their faces for the honour of God.

BECKET. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, praise!
I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by crowns,
The crowd that hungers for a crown in heaven
Is my true king.

HERBERT. Thy true King bade thee be
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy net.

BECKET. I am too like the King here; both of us
Too headlong for our office. Better have been
A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,
Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty rill
That falls into it—the green field—the grey church—
The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh—
The more or less of daily labour done—
The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
Piping for bread—the daily want supplied—
The daily pleasure to supply it.

HERBERT. Ah, Thomas,
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

BECKET. Well, maybe, no.

HERBERT. But bear with Walter Map,
For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

WALTER MAP. Pity, my lord, that you have quenched the warmth of France toward you, tho' His Holiness, after much smouldering and smoking, be kindled again upon your quarter.

BECKET. Ay, if he do not end in smoke again.

WALTER MAP. My lord, the fire, when first kindled, said to the smoke, "Go up, my son, straight to heaven." And the smoke said, "I go;" but anon the North-east took and turned him South-west, then the South-west turned him North-east, and so of the other winds; but it was in him to go up straight if the time had been quieter. Your lordship affects the unwavering perpendicular; but His Holiness, pushed one way by the Empire and another by England, if he move at all—Heaven stay him!—is fain to diagonalise.

HERBERT. Diagonalise! thou art a word-monger.
Our Thomas never will diagonalise.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.
Diagonalise!

WALTER MAP. Is the world any the worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth? or any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of the Truth?

BECKET. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people
Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.
Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map!

WALTER MAP. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

BECKET. I pray God pardon mine infirmity!

WALTER MAP. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth—always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust—always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe—to and fro—tick-tack—we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine—Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Red-hats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. [*Exit.*

BECKET. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map.
Save for myself no Rome were left in England,
All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,
Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?
Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,
Which even Peter had not dared? condemn
The blameless exile?—
HERBERT. Thee, thou holy Thomas!
I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.
BECKET. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy,
I would have made Rome know she still is Rome—
Who stands aghast at her eternal self
And shakes at mortal kings—her vacillation,
Avarice, craft—O God, how many an innocent
Has left his bones upon the way to Rome
Unwept, uncared for! Yea—on mine own self
The King had had no power except for Rome.
'T is not the King who is guilty of mine exile,
But Rome, Rome, Rome!
HERBERT. My lord, I see this Louis
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.
BECKET. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,
Nor yet a prophet's son.

HERBERT. Whatever he say,
Deny not thou God's honour for a king.
The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

LOUIS. My dear lord archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins
That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry
Have been, despite his kingly promise given
To our own self of pardon, evilly used
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.
The Church alone hath eyes—and now I see
That I was blind—suffer the phrase—surrendering
God's honour to the pleasure of a man.
Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*

BECKET. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

LOUIS (*rising*). Return to Sens, where we will care for you.
The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;
Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all.

[*Exeunt.*

VOICES FROM THE CROWD. Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY *and* JOHN OF OXFORD.

HENRY (*looking after* KING LOUIS *and* BECKET). Ay, there they go—both backs are turn'd to me—

Why, then I strike into my former path
For England, crown young Henry there, and make
Our waning Eleanor all but love me!
John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.
They call thee John the Swearer.
JOHN OF OXFORD. For this reason,
That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his side,
And ever mean to do it.
HENRY (*claps him on the shoulder*). Honest John!
To Rome again! the storm begins again.
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,
Threaten our junction with the Emperor—flatter
And fright the Pope—bribe all the cardinals—leave
Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—
Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!
I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III

SCENE I.—The Bower

Henry *and* Rosamund.

Henry. All that you say is just. I cannot answer it
Till better times, when I shall put away—
Rosamund. What will you put away?
Henry. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you now
There is no woman that I love so well.
Rosamund. No woman but should be content with that—
Henry. And one fair child to fondle!
Rosamund. O, yes, the child
We waited for so long—Heaven's gift at last—
And how you doted on him then! To-day
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—yes—
But then the child *is* such a child! What chance
That he should ever spread into the man

Here in our silence? I have done my best.
I am not learn'd.

HENRY. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?
Have you had any alarm? no stranger?

ROSAMUND. No.
The warder of the bower hath given himself
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps
When he should watch; and yet what fear? the people
Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,
Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine
Springs from the loneliness of my poor bower,
Which weighs even on me.

HENRY. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes
Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was your saying,
All pleased you so at first.

ROSAMUND. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.
But you were oftener there. I have none but you.
The brook's voice is not yours, and no flower, not
The sun himself, should he be changed to one;
Could shine away the darkness of that gap
Left by the lack of love.

HENRY. The lack of love!

ROSAMUND. Of one we love. Nay, I would not be bold,
Yet hoped ere this you might—
[*Looks earnestly at him.*
HENRY. Anything further?
ROSAMUND. Only my best bower-maiden died of late,
And that old priest whom John of Salisbury trusted
Hath sent another.
HENRY. Secret?
ROSAMUND. I but ask'd her
One question, and she primm'd her mouth and put
Her hands together—thus—and said, God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.
HENRY. What did you ask her?
ROSAMUND. Some daily something-nothing.
HENRY. Secret, then?
ROSAMUND. I do not love her. Must you go, my liege,
So suddenly?
HENRY. I came to England suddenly,
And on a great occasion sure to wake
As great a wrath in Becket—
ROSAMUND. Always Becket!
He always comes between us.
HENRY. And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the bounds. [*Exeunt.*

MARGERY (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower
  Under the rose!
Bee must n't buzz,
  Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
  Nobody near!
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
  Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
  Tit on the tree!
Bird must n't tell,
  Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it 's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said

it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bade me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day—and then not to speak one word, for that 's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I should n't ha' minded the apple, for what 's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I 'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen—tho' to be sure if I had n't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what 's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter* Rosamund), and, my lady, tho' I should n't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean?

Margery. I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha'

seen the King once at Oxford, and he 's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King 's married, for King Louis—

ROSAMUND. Married!

MARGERY. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis—

ROSAMUND. Hush!

MARGERY. And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and—

ROSAMUND. The people lie.

MARGERY. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say she makes songs, and that 's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

ROSAMUND. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

MARGERY. There 's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I could n't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all

Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the "Crown."

ROSAMUND. The crown! who?

MARGERY. Mother.

ROSAMUND. I mean her whom you call —fancy— my husband's brother's wife.

MARGERY. O, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if—

ROSAMUND. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit* MARGERY.

He charged me not to question any of those
About me. Have I? no! she question'd *me.*
Did she not slander *him?* Should she stay here?
May she not tempt me, being at my side,
To question *her?* Nay, can I send her hence
Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.
I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known
Nothing but him—happy to know no more,
So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,
And bound me by his love to secrecy
Till his own time.
Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
Not heard ill things of her in France? O, she 's
The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,
Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,
Myself confused with parting from the King.

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Bee must n't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

ROSAMUND. Yet her—what her? he hinted of some her—
When he was here before—
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd
From love's clear path into the common bush,
And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,
Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Even with a word?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Bird must n't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

ROSAMUND. I would not hear him. Nay—there 's more—he frown'd
"No mate for her, if it should come to that"—
To that—to what?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Whoop—but he knows,
Whoop—but he knows.

ROSAMUND. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

Enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey!

GEOFFREY. What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

ROSAMUND. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

GEOFFREY. Ay, but he 's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I 'll go play with her.

[*Exit* GEOFFREY.

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom—
O rainbow, stay!

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSAMUND'S BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

ELEANOR. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.
Watch! he will out again, and presently,

Seeing he must to Westminster and crown
Young Henry there to-morrow.

FITZURSE. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*

Hark! Madam!

ELEANOR. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!

[*A countryman flying.*

Whither away, man? what are you flying from?

COUNTRYMAN. The witch! the witch! she sits naked by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in there to-day. I holla'd to him, but he did n't hear me; he 'll never out again, the witch has got him. I dare n't stay—I dare n't stay!

ELEANOR. Kind of the witch to give thee warning, tho'. [*Man flies.*

Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

FITZURSE. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.

COUNTRYMAN. Fly thou, too. The King keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that

will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

ELEANOR. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game look to itself.

[*Horn.*

FITZURSE. Again!—
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.

ELEANOR. I have my dagger here to still their throats.

FITZURSE. Nay, Madam, not to-night—the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?

ELEANOR. Well—well—away.

SCENE III.—TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH BARONAGE

BECKET *and* HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

BECKET. See here!

HERBERT. What 's here?

BECKET. A notice from the priest
To whom our John of Salisbury committed
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should be back
In England even for this.

HERBERT. These are by-things
In the great cause.

BECKET. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger. I know
Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before
The Church should suffer wrong!

HERBERT. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter Map?

BECKET. He hath the Pope's last letters, and they threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict;
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,
Or scarce would smile that fashion.

HERBERT. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should catch
An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!
He bows, he bares his head, he is coming hither.
Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY *and* WALTER MAP.

HENRY. We have had so many hours together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more alone.

BECKET. My liege, your will and happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt* KING *and* BECKET.

HERBERT. The same smile still.

WALTER MAP. Do you see that great black cloud that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

HERBERT. And feel it too.

WALTER MAP. And see you yon side-beam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were?

HERBERT. Ay.

WALTER MAP. It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I would n't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud—this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter—yea, even for the sake of the Church; for, truly, as the case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than a she-goat. But our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the grave-digger's child I have heard of, trying to

ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

HERBERT. Were you there?

WALTER MAP. In the church rope?—no. I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

HERBERT. And how did Roger of York comport himself?

WALTER MAP. As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger, the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face, as who should say "what 's to follow?" but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks "the master."

HERBERT. And the father-king?

WALTER MAP. The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling him-

self, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuosity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—

HERBERT. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

WALTER MAP. For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

HERBERT. There again, Goliasing and Goliathising!

WALTER MAP. And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

HERBERT. And all manner of creeping things too?

WALTER MAP. Well, there were abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—"great honour," says he, "from

the King's self to the King's son." Did you hear the young King's quip?

HERBERT. No, what was it?

WALTER MAP. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, "Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?" And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

HERBERT. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is!

Re-enter HENRY *and* BECKET. (*During their conference the* BARONS *and* BISHOPS OF FRANCE *and* ENGLAND *come in at back of stage.*)

BECKET. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,

The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—
The golden ornaments are stolen from her—

HENRY. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

BECKET. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

HENRY. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

BECKET. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,
London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

HENRY. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

BECKET. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

HENRY. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

BECKET. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

HENRY. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

BECKET. And is it then with thy good-will that I
Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those

Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

HENRY. Well, well, then—have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.
What more, my lord archbishop? What more, Thomas?
I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

BECKET. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

HENRY (*holding out his hand*). Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most unknightly,
Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.

HERBERT. All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

HENRY. And so farewell until we meet in England.

BECKET. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

HENRY. How, do you make me a traitor?

BECKET. No, indeed!
That be far from thee.

HENRY. Come, stay with us, then,
Before you part for England.

BECKET. I am bound

For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,
Who helpt me when none else.

HERBERT. He said thy life
Was not one hour's worth in England save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

HENRY. He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,
When I was in mine anger with King Louis,
I sware I would not give the kiss of peace,
Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,
Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,
I would there were that perfect trust between us,
That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King
Had come between us! Even now—who knows?—
I might deliver all things to thy hand—
If—but say I no more—farewell, my lord.

BECKET. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit* HENRY, *then the* BARONS *and* BISHOPS.

WALTER MAP. There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him.

BECKET. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

WALTER MAP. And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

BECKET. Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's "*if*
Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

HERBERT. O, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,
For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

BECKET. Nay, of the people there are many with me.

WALTER MAP. I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who shall I say?—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

BECKET. At their peril, at their peril—

WALTER MAP. For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to

howl for the King, and you still move against him,
you may have no less than to die for it; but God and
his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return
and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I
must follow the King. [*Exit.*

HERBERT. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did
the King
Speak of the customs?

BECKET. No!—To die for it—
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die, the Church can never die.
The King 's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so—my visions in the Lord—
It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England
Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep
May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.
Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my
voice
Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again between us,
And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice
To find my stray sheep back within the fold.
The crowd are scattering, let us move away!
And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I.—The Outskirts of the Bower

Geoffrey (*coming out of the wood*). Light again! light again! Margery? no, that 's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (*entering*). Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geoffrey. They call her— But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

GEOFFREY. My liege.

ELEANOR. Pretty one, how camest thou?

GEOFFREY. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

ELEANOR. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

GEOFFREY. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

ELEANOR. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

GEOFFREY. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

ELEANOR. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—(*aside*) little bastard! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

GEOFFREY. No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

ELEANOR. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

GEOFFREY. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

ELEANOR. Where 's the warder?

GEOFFREY. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

ELEANOR. Ay? who was that?

GEOFFREY. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you 'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER

ROSAMUND. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost!
I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;
I sent another, and she comes not back.
I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,
Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery
And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY *and* ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to!
[*Seeing* ELEANOR.
Ha, you!
How came you hither?

ELEANOR. Your own child brought me hither!

GEOFFREY. You said you could n't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

ROSAMUND. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worse befall you.

ELEANOR. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the King. The King
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman—
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him
To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Even in a cage of gold, we had words of late,
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

ROSAMUND. I *should* believe it.

ELEANOR. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

ROSAMUND. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

GEOFFREY. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I 'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

ROSAMUND. Go. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.

ELEANOR. He is easily found again. *Do* you believe it?
I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it—see!
[*Draws a dagger.*
What! have I scared the red rose from your face
Into your heart? But this will find it there,
And dig it from the root for ever.
ROSAMUND. Help! help!
ELEANOR. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,
Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.
ROSAMUND. I do beseech you—my child is so young,
So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.
I am not so happy I could not die myself,
But the child is so young. You have children—his;
And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—
Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done
Somehow; but if you do not—there are those
Who say you do not love him—let me go
With my young boy, and I will hide my face,
Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;
The King shall never hear of me again,
But I will beg my bread along the world
With my young boy, and God will be our guide.
I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.

ELEANOR. Will you not say you are not married
to him?

ROSAMUND. Ay, Madam, I can *say* it, if you will.

ELEANOR. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

ROSAMUND. No.

ELEANOR. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

ROSAMUND. No.
I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from love to love,
Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.
I have heard of such—yea, even among those
Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any such,
I am snow to mud.

ELEANOR. The more the pity then
That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

FITZURSE. Give her to me.

ELEANOR. The Judas-lover of our passion play
Hath track'd us hither.

FITZURSE. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

ELEANOR. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could
you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,
Dark even from a side glance of the moon,
And oublietted in the centre—No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

FITZURSE. You bade me take revenge another way—
To bring her to the dust.—Come with me, love,
And I will love thee.—Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.

ELEANOR. How sayst thou, sweetheart?
Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

ROSAMUND. Give me the poison; set me free of him!
[ELEANOR *offers the vial.*
No, no! I will not have it.

ELEANOR. Then this other,
The wiser choice because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

ROSAMUND. O, I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour,
You play with words. You had never used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child—
No—mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

ELEANOR. Play!—that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood. Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it. Arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what 's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times
Never to leave him—and that merits death,
False oath on holy cross—for thou must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Even than the death. Who knows but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee?
Come hither, man; stand there. (*To* ROSAMUND.)
Take thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitzurse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.

ROSAMUND (*rising*). I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I

Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it. Both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:
"Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the East,
A hissing in the West!" Have we not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father—
Nay, even the accursed heathen Saladdeen—
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.

ELEANOR (*raising the dagger*). This in thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

Enter BECKET *from behind. Catches hold of her arm.*

BECKET. Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*

ELEANOR. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems—
At least mine own is frailer; you are laming it.

BECKET. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry bade me
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.

ELEANOR. Nor you, nor I
Have now to learn, my lord, that our good Henry
Says many a thing in sudden heats which he
Gainsays by next sunrising—often ready
To tear himself for having said as much.
My lord, Fitzurse—

BECKET. He too! what dost thou here?
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?
One downward plunge of his paw would rend away
Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from thee.
Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
And make thee a world's horror.

FITZURSE. My lord, I shall
Remember this.

BECKET. I *do* remember thee;
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[*Exit* FITZURSE.

Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.

ELEANOR. Might not your courtesy stoop to hand it me?
But crowns must bow when mitres sit so high.
Well—well—too costly to be left or lost.

[*Picks up the dagger.*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at
Our unfamiliar beauties of the West;
But wonder'd more at my much constancy
To the monk-king, Louis, our former burthen,
From whom, as being too kin, you know, my lord,
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.
I think, time given, I could have talk'd him out of
His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.
What excellent workmanship! In our poor West
We cannot do it so well.

BECKET. We can do worse.
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;
I heard your savage cry.

ELEANOR. Well acted, was it?
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are known
Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one
That mars a cause with over-violence.
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of myself.
We thought to scare this minion of the King
Back from her churchless commerce with the King
To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,
Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt the farce.
My savage cry? Why, she—she—when I strove
To work against her licence for her good,
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges that
The King himself, for love of his own sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her; whereupon
I menaced her with this, as when we threaten
A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you hear me?
Believe or no, I care not. You have lost
The ear of the King. I have it.—My lord paramount,
Our great High-priest, will not your Holiness
Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

BECKET. Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word;
Madam, I will not answer you one word.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee. Leave it, daughter;
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,
And live what may be left thee of a life
Saved as by miracle alone with Him
Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

GEOFFREY. Mother, you told me a great fib; it was n't in the willow.

BECKET. Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee—
Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt* BECKET, ROSAMUND, *and* GEOFFREY.

ELEANOR. The world hath trick'd her—that 's the King; if so,
There was the farce, the feint—not mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
Till the worm turn'd—not life shot up in blood,
But death drawn in;—(*looking at the vial*) *this* was no
feint, then? no.
But can I swear to that, had she but given
Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks
Had she but bowed herself to meet the wave
Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,
I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much
To harm her. Henry—Becket tells him this—
To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
Too politic for that. Imprison me?
No, for it came to nothing—only a feint.
Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
I 'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.
Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,
A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes
Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
Tear out her heart—kill, kill with knife or venom
One of his slanderous harlots? "None of such?"
I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,
She lives—but not for him one point is gain'd.
O, I that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,
Scorning his monkery,—I that wedded Henry,
Honouring his manhood—will he not mock at me,
The jealous fool balk'd of her will—with *him?*
But he and he must never meet again.
Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

FITZURSE. Here, Madam, at your pleasure.

ELEANOR. My pleasure is to have a man about me.
Why did you slink away so like a cur?

FITZURSE. Madam, I am as much man as the King.
Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

ELEANOR. He grovels to the Church when he 's
black-blooded,
But kinglike fought the proud archbishop,—kinglike
Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,
The Normans, striving still to break or bind
The spiritual giant with our island laws
And customs, made me for the moment proud
Even of that stale Church-bond which link'd me with
him
To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure
But that I love him still. Thou as much man!
No more of that; we will to France and be
Beforehand with the King, and brew from out
This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such
A strong hate-philtre as may madden him—madden
Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V

SCENE I.—Castle in Normandy. King's Chamber

Henry, Roger of York, Foliot, Jocelyn of Salisbury.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed followers,
Hath broken all his promises to thyself,
Cursed and anathematised us right and left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your son—

Henry. Roger of York, you always hated him,
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.

Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.
In mine own cause I strove against him there,
And in thy cause I strive against him now.

Henry. I cannot think he moves against my son,
Knowing right well with what a tenderness
He loved my son.

Roger of York. Before you made him king.

But Becket ever moves against a king.
The Church is all—the crime to be a king.
We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more land
Than any crown in Europe, will not yield
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

HENRY. Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.

FOLIOT. My royal liege, in aiming at your love,
It may be sometimes I have overshot
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,
And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.
I boast not; but you know thro' all this quarrel
I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown
Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,
Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,
And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,
York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,
Are push'd from out communion of the Church.

JOCELYN OF SALISBURY. Becket hath trodden on us like worms, my liege,
Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,
Cries to the King.

HENRY (*aside*). Take care o' thyself, O King!

JOCELYN OF SALISBURY. Being so crush'd and so humiliated
We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat
Because of Becket.

HENRY. What would ye have me do?

ROGER OF YORK. Summon your barons; take their counsel; yet
I know—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,
Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

HENRY. What?—Ay—but pray you do not work upon me.
I see your drift—it may be so—and yet
You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?
He shall absolve you—you shall have redress.
I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.
I 'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, *and* JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.
If God would take him in some sudden way—
Would he were dead! [*Lies down.*

PAGE (*entering*). My liege, the Queen of England.

HENRY. God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

Enter ELEANOR.

ELEANOR. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.
I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd
I was the bride of England, and a queen.

HENRY. And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!
ELEANOR. The brideless Becket is thy king and mine;
I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
HENRY. Except I clap thee into prison here,
Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.
Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!
You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;
You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.
ELEANOR. And why, my lord, should I be wife to one
That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no-wife—her six and thirty sail
Of Provence blew you to your English throne;
And this no-wife has borne you four brave sons,
And one of them at least is like to prove
Bigger in our small world than thou art.
HENRY. Ay—
Richard, if he *be* mine—I hope him mine.
But thou art like enough to make him thine.
ELEANOR. Becket is like enough to make all his.
HENRY. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,
That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,
Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.
ELEANOR. I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

HENRY. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe
My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.
What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?
ELEANOR. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.
Do you know this cross, my liege?
HENRY (*turning his head*). Away! Not I.
ELEANOR. Not even the central diamond, worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.
HENRY. That?
ELEANOR. I gave it you, and you your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,
So dead henceforth to you.
HENRY. Dead! you have murder'd her,
Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.
ELEANOR. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.
HENRY (*calling out*). Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.
ELEANOR. And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?
First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.

HENRY. O devil, can I free her from the grave?

ELEANOR. You are too tragic; both of us are players
In such a comedy as our court of Provence
Had laugh'd at. That 's a delicate Latin lay
Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric
Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure
A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?
(*Offering the cross. He dashes it down.*)
Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.
Then mine once more. (*Puts it on.*)
Your cleric hath your lady.
Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!
Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord
Not only of your vassals but amours,
Thro' chastest honour of the Decalogue
Hath used the full authority of his Church
To put her into Godstow nunnery.

HENRY. To put her into Godstow nunnery!
He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—
I do remember.
He bade me put her into a nunnery—
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!
The Church! the Church!
God's eyes! I would the Church were down in hell!
[*Exit.*

ELEANOR. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

FITZURSE. What made the King cry out so furiously?

ELEANOR. Our Becket, who will not absolve the bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this Becket.

FITZURSE. I hate him for his insolence to all.

DE TRACY. And I for all his insolence to thee.

DE BRITO. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

DE MORVILLE. I do not love him, for he did his best
To break the barons, and now braves the King.

ELEANOR. Strike, then, at once, the King would have him—See!

Re-enter HENRY.

HENRY. No man to love me, honour me, obey me!
Sluggards and fools!
The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!
The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!
The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,
A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,
To shake my throne, to push into my chamber—
My bed, where even the slave is private—he—
I 'll have her out again, he shall absolve
The bishops—they but did my will—not you—

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?
You are no King's men—you—you—you are Becket's men.
Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
Will no man free me from this pestilent priest?

[*Exit.*

[*The* KNIGHTS *draw their swords.*

ELEANOR. *Are* ye King's men? I am King's woman, I.

THE KNIGHTS. King's men! King's men!

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET *and* JOHN OF SALISBURY.

BECKET. York said so?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Yes: a man may take good counsel
Even from his foe.

BECKET. York will say anything.
What is he saying now? gone to the King
And taken our anathema with him. York!
Can the King de-anathematise this York?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd to England
Like some wise prince of this world from his wars,
With more of olive-branch and amnesty
For foes at home—thou hast raised the world against thee.

BECKET. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. If it were more of this world it might be
More of the next. A policy of wise pardon
Wins here as well as there. To bless thine enemies—

BECKET. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. And may there not be something
Of this world's leaven in thee too, when crying
On Holy Church to thunder out her rights
And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah, Thomas,
The lightnings that we think are only Heaven's
Flash sometimes out of earth against the heavens.
The soldier, when he lets his whole self go
Lost in the common good, the common wrong,
Strikes truest even for his own self. I crave
Thy pardon—I have still thy leave to speak.
Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet
We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may,
Yea, even when we know not, mix our spites
And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM.

BECKET. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim;
What say ye there of Becket?

GRIM. *I* believe him
The bravest in our roll of primates down
From Austin—there are some—for there are men
Of canker'd judgment everywhere—
BECKET. Who hold
With York, with York against me.
GRIM. Well, my lord,
A stranger monk desires access to you.
BECKET. York against Canterbury, York against God!
I am open to him. [*Exit* GRIM.

Enter ROSAMUND *as a Monk.*

ROSAMUND. Can I speak with you
Alone, my father?
BECKET. Come you to confess?
ROSAMUND. Not now.
BECKET. Then speak; this is my other self,
Who, like my conscience, never lets me be.
ROSAMUND (*throwing back the cowl*). I know him, our good John of Salisbury.
BECKET. Breaking already from thy novitiate
To plunge into this bitter world again—
These wells of Marah! I am grieved, my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.
ROSAMUND. Small peace was mine in my novitiate, father.
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had with me
The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower;
I think our abbess knew it and allow'd it.
I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me
Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once;
I told him I was bound to see the archbishop:
"Pass on," he said, and in thy name I pass'd
From house to house. In one a son stone-blind
Sat by his mother's hearth. He had gone too far
Into the King's own woods; and the poor mother,
Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
Cried out against the cruelty of the King.
I said it was the King's courts, not the King,
But she would not believe me, and she wish'd
The Church were king; she had seen the archbishop once,
So mild, so kind. The people love thee, father.

BECKET. Alas! when I was Chancellor to the King,
I fear I was as cruel as the King.

ROSAMUND. Cruel? O, no—it is the law, not he;
The customs of the realm.

BECKET. The customs! customs!

ROSAMUND. My lord, you have not excommunicated him?
O, if you have, absolve him!

BECKET. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

ROSAMUND. I know *him*.
Then you have done it, and I call *you* cruel.
JOHN OF SALISBURY. No, daughter, you mistake
our good archbishop;
For once in France the King had been so harsh,
He thought to excommunicate him—Thomas,
You could not—old affection master'd you,
You falter'd into tears.
ROSAMUND. God bless him for it!
BECKET. Nay, make me not a woman, John of
Salisbury,
Nor make me traitor to my holy office.
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
"The King is sick and almost unto death."
How could I excommunicate him then?
ROSAMUND. And wilt thou excommunicate him
now?
BECKET. Daughter, my time is short, I shall not
do it.
And were it longer—well—I should not do it.
ROSAMUND. Thanks in this life, and in the life to
come!
BECKET. Get thee back to thy nunnery with all
haste;
Let this be thy last trespass. But one question—
How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey?
No fever, cough, croup, sickness?
ROSAMUND. No, but saved

From all that by our solitude. The plagues
That smite the city spare the solitudes.

BECKET. God save him from all sickness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,
May that save thee! Doth he remember me?

ROSAMUND. I warrant him.

BECKET. He is marvellously like thee.

ROSAMUND. Liker the King.

BECKET. No, daughter.

ROSAMUND. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises; he will be very king.

BECKET. Even so; but think not of the King. Farewell!

ROSAMUND. My lord, the city is full of armed men.

BECKET. Even so. Farewell!

ROSAMUND. I will but pass to vespers,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so return.

BECKET. Pray for me too; much need of prayer have I.

[ROSAMUND *kneels and goes.*

Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of child!

JOHN OF SALISBURY. More gain than loss; for of your wives you shall
Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems

Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it—one
So charged with tongue that every thread of thought
Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to boot,
Whose evil song far on into the night
Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope but death;
One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the hearth;
And one that being thwarted ever swoons
And weeps herself into the place of power;
And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci.*
So rare the household honey-making bee,
Man's help! but we, we have the Blessed Virgin
For worship, and our Mother Church for bride;
And all the souls we saved and father'd here
Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.
What noise was that? she told us of arm'd men
Here in the city. Will you not withdraw?

BECKET. I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.
Look! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all
The world God made—even the beast—the bird!

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay, still a lover of the beast and bird?
But these arm'd men—will you not hide yourself?
Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Saltwood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood
Too long o'er this hard egg, the world, and send
Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break
Into young angels. Pray you, hide yourself.

BECKET. There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid
Lived in my mother's house; if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her—she
Was the world's lily.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay, and what of her?

BECKET. She died of leprosy.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. I know not why
You call these old things back again, my lord.

BECKET. The drowning man, they say, remembers all
The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay—but these arm'd men—will *you* drown *yourself?*
He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.

BECKET. What day of the week? Tuesday?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Tuesday, my lord.

BECKET. On a Tuesday was I born, and on a Tuesday
Baptised; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday pass'd
From England into bitter banishment;
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me

The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,
And on a Tuesday—

TRACY *enters, then* FITZURSE, DE BRITO, *and* DE MORVILLE. MONKS *following.*

—on a Tuesday— Tracy!

(*A long silence, broken by* FITZURSE *saying, contemptuously,*)

God help thee!

JOHN OF SALISBURY (*aside*). How the good archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of scorn.

FITZURSE. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you?

BECKET. As you will.

FITZURSE. Nay, as *you* will.

BECKET. Nay, as *you* will.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Why, then,
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four* KNIGHTS *and* BECKET.

FITZURSE. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

DE MORVILLE. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

FITZURSE. The King condemns your excommunicating—

BECKET. This is no secret, but a public matter.
In here again!

JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* MONKS *return*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

FITZURSE. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
Commands you to be dutiful and leal
To your young King on this side of the water,
Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.
What! you would make his coronation void
By cursing those who crown'd him. Out upon you!

BECKET. Reginald, all men know I loved the prince.
His father gave him to my care, and I
Became his second father. He had his faults,
For which I would have laid mine own life down
To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,
And love him next after my lord his father.
Rather than dim the splendour of his crown
I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces
So that were done in equity.

FITZURSE. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—
Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you over-sea
To answer for it in his Norman courts.
BECKET. Prate not of bonds, for never, O, never again
Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea
Divide me from the mother church of England,
My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
O, ay—the bells rang out even to deafening,
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns
In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,
Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their raiment down
Before me—would have made my pathway flowers,
Save that it was midwinter in the street,
But full midsummer in those honest hearts.
FITZURSE. The King commands you to absolve the bishops
Whom you have excommunicated.
BECKET. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.
FITZURSE. But you advised the Pope.
BECKET. And so I did.
They have but to submit.
THE FOUR KNIGHTS. The King commands you.
We are all King's men.
BECKET. King's men at least should know
That their own King closed with me last July
That I should pass the censures of the Church
On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

FITZURSE. What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate
The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

BECKET. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.
But for the truth of this I make appeal
To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,
Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.
Nay, you yourself were there; you heard yourself.

FITZURSE. I was not there.

BECKET. I saw you there.

FITZURSE. I was not.

BECKET. You were. I never forget anything.

FITZURSE. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.
How long shall we forbear him?

JOHN OF SALISBURY (*drawing* BECKET *aside*). O my good lord,
Speak with them privately on this hereafter.
You see they have been revelling, and I fear
Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines
For any murderous brawl.

BECKET. And yet they prate
Of mine, my brawls, when those that name themselves
Of the King's part have broken down our barns,
Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,
Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,
They stood on Dover beach to murder me,
They slew my stags in mine own manor here,
Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,
Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,
The old King's present, carried off the casks,
Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half
In Pevensey Castle—

DE MORVILLE. Why not rather then,
If this be so, complain to your young King,
Not punish of your own authority?

BECKET. Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.
They knew he loved me.
Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!
Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,
I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.
Give to the King the things that are the King's,
And those of God to God.

FITZURSE. Threats! threats! ye hear him.
What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The* KNIGHTS *come round* BECKET.

DE TRACY. He shall not.

DE BRITO. Well, as yet—I should be grateful—
He hath not excommunicated *me*.

BECKET. Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.
I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

DE BRITO. Your Christian's Christian charity!

BECKET. By Saint Denis—
DE BRITO. Ay, by Saint Denis, now will he flame out,
And lose his head as old Saint Denis did.
BECKET. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
To God and to the Holy Father. No!
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth
Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
Blowing the world against me, I would stand
Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files who die
For God, to people heaven in the great day
When God makes up His jewels. Once I fled—
Never again, and you—I marvel at you—
Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn
Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor—
My vassals—and yet threaten your archbishop
In his own house.
KNIGHTS. Nothing can be between us
That goes against our fealty to the King.
FITZURSE. And in his name we charge you that ye keep
This traitor from escaping.
BECKET. Rest you easy,

For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
Here, here, here will you find me.
DE MORVILLE. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life?
BECKET. As I shall speak again.
FITZURSE, DE TRACY, *and* DE BRITO. To arms!
[*They rush out,* DE MORVILLE *lingers.*
BECKET. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even now
You seem the least assassin of the four.
O, do not damn yourself for company!
Is it too late for me to save your soul?
I pray you for one moment stay and speak.
DE MORVILLE. Becket, it *is* too late. [*Exit.*
BECKET. Is it too late?
Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.
KNIGHTS (*in the distance*). Close the great gate—
ho, there—upon the town!
BECKET'S RETAINERS. Shut the hall-doors!
[*A pause.*
BECKET. You hear them, brother John;
Why do you stand so silent, brother John?
JOHN OF SALISBURY. For I was musing on an
ancient saw,
Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re;
Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace?
Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus. Thomas,
Why should you heat yourself for such as these?

BECKET. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean
On any man's advising but your own.

BECKET. Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have done?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. You should have taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your presence.
They seek—you make—occasion for your death.

BECKET. My counsel is already taken, John.
I am prepared to die.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. We are sinners all,
The best of all not all-prepared to die.

BECKET. God's will be done!

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Ay, well. God's will be done!

GRIM (*re-entering*). My lord, the knights are arming in the garden
Beneath the sycamore.

BECKET. Good! let them arm.

GRIM. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.
He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

BECKET. No fear!

GRIM. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The* MONKS *flee.*

BECKET (*rising*). Our dovecote flown!
I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

BECKET. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?
Valour and holy life should go together.
Why should all monks be cowards?

JOHN OF SALISBURY. Are they so?
I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

BECKET. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

GRIM. May they not say you dared not show yourself
In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.
They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

BECKET. Ay, monks, not men.

GRIM. I am a monk, my lord.
Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.
Some would stand by you to the death.

BECKET. Your pardon.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. He said, "Attend the office."

BECKET. Attend the office?
Why then—the Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?
Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John.
[GRIM *takes it.*
GRIM. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!
BECKET. The mitre!
JOHN OF SALISBURY. Will you wear it?—there!
[BECKET *puts on the mitre*
BECKET. The pall!
I go to meet my King! [*Puts on the pall.*
GRIM. To meet the King?
[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*
JOHN OF SALISBURY. Why do you move with such a stateliness?
Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,
Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?
BECKET. Why do the heathen rage? My two good friends,
What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?
And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom
In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.
Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III.—NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle.

Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS *heard chanting the service.* ROSAMUND *kneeling.*

ROSAMUND. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.
[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*
Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—
Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him!
[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*

BECKET (*entering, forced along by* JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* GRIM). No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person;
Why do you force me thus against my will?

GRIM. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

BECKET. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

JOHN OF SALISBURY. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops.* MONKS *come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*

MONKS. Here is the great archbishop! He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

BECKET. Together?—get you back! go on with the office.

MONKS. Come, then, with us to vespers.

BECKET. How can I come
When you so block the entry? Back, I say!
Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*

MONKS. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!

BECKET. What do these people fear?

MONKS. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

BECKET. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.

GRIM AND OTHERS. Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*

BECKET. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?
Undo the doors; the church is not a castle.
Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?
What, have I lost authority among you?
Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter* Monks *from cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!
Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. O, my lord archbishop,
A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—
To the choir, to the choir!

[Monks *divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears* Becket *along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
And die upon the patriarchal throne
Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,
Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and downward*). That way or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. O, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.
And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,
Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!
I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in heaven, the Church on earth—
The power of life in death to make her free!

Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALISBURY *flies to the altar of Saint Benedict.*

FITZURSE. Here, here, King's men!
[*Catches hold of the last flying* MONK.
Where is the traitor Becket?

MONK. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.
I am not he indeed!

FITZURSE. Hence to the fiend!
[*Pushes him away.*
Where is this treble traitor to the King?

DE TRACY. Where is the archbishop, Thomas Becket?

BECKET. Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England.
[*Descending into the transept.*
I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

FITZURSE. Your life.

DE TRACY. Your life.

DE MORVILLE. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

BECKET. Never,—
Except they make submission to the Church.
You had my answer to that cry before.

DE MORVILLE. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

BECKET. I will not.
I am readier to be slain than thou to slay.
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
One of my flock!

FITZURSE. Was not the great gate shut?
They are thronging in to vespers—half the town.
We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and carry him!
Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!

DE MORVILLE. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

[FITZURSE *lays hold of the* ARCHBISHOP'S *pall.*

BECKET. Touch me not!

DE BRITO. How the good priest gods himself!
He is not yet ascended to the Father.

FITZURSE. I will not only touch, but drag thee hence.

BECKET. Thou art my man, thou art my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost to falling.*

DE TRACY (*lays hold of the pall*). Come; as he said, thou art our prisoner.

BECKET. Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*

FITZURSE (*advances with drawn sword*). I told thee that I should remember thee!

BECKET. Profligate pander!

FITZURSE. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[*Strikes off the* ARCHBISHOP'S *mitre, and wounds him in the forehead.*

BECKET (*covers his eyes with his hand*). I do commend my cause to God, the Virgin,
Saint Denis of France and Saint Alphege of England,
And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[GRIM *wraps his arms about the* ARCHBISHOP.

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[TRACY *has arisen, and approaches, hesitatingly, with his sword raised.*

FITZURSE. Strike him, Tracy!

ROSAMUND (*rushing down steps from the choir*). No, no, no, no!

FITZURSE. This wanton here. De Morville,
Hold her away.

DE MORVILLE. I hold her.

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ROSAMUND (*held back by* DE MORVILLE, *and stretching out her arms*).

Mercy, mercy,
As you would hope for mercy!

FITZURSE. Strike, I say!

GRIM. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!
Strike our archbishop in his own cathedral!
The Pope, the King, will curse you—the whole world
Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!
Nay, nay, good Tracy. [*Lifts his arm.*

FITZURSE. Answer not, but strike.

DE TRACY. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on* GRIM'S *arm, and glances from it, wounding* BECKET.

GRIM. Mine arm is sever'd.
I can no more—fight out the good fight—die
Conqueror.

[*Staggers into the chapel of Saint Benedict.*

BECKET (*falling on his knees*). At the right hand of Power—
Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—
Into thy hands, O Lord—into thy hands!—

[*Sinks prone.*

DE BRITO. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls!
(*Kills him.*)
The traitor 's dead, and will arise no more.

FITZURSE. Nay, have we still'd him? What! the great archbishop!
Does he breathe? No?

DE TRACY. No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts.*

DE MORVILLE. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

DE BRITO. The deed 's done—
Away!

[DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, *rush out, crying "King's men!"* DE MORVILLE *follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral.* ROSAMUND *seen kneeling by the body of* BECKET.

The Falcon

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.
FILIPPO, *the Count's foster-brother.*
THE LADY GIOVANNA.
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

The Falcon

SCENE—An Italian Cottage, Castle and Mountains seen through Window

Elisabetta *discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The* Count *with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.*

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?
My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and, howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven. [*Crosses to chair.*

I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me;
I am as lone and loveless as thyself.
[*Sits in chair.*
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be* jealous!
Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna
Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth—
No, no again to that! [*Rises and turns.*
My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

ELISABETTA. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

COUNT. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.
What art thou doing there?

ELISABETTA. Darning, your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now.
Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.
This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*), they are but blue beads—my Piero,
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,
Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

COUNT. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.
ELISABETTA. She told thee as much?
COUNT. No, no—a friend of hers.
ELISABETTA. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!
COUNT. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.
ELISABETTA. But hath she yet return'd thy love?
COUNT. Not yet!
ELISABETTA. She should return thy necklace then.
COUNT. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller
To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.
ELISABETTA. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know? She knows
There 's none such other—
COUNT. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO.

FILIPPO. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that 's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for

any of them—that 's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that 's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that 's positive again—that 's better!

ELISABETTA. Sh—sh—Filippo!

FILIPPO (*turns half round*). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

ELISABETTA. Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

COUNT. Let him—he never spares me to my face!

FILIPPO. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I 'm honest, your lordship.

COUNT. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[ELISABETTA *crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*

FILIPPO. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

COUNT. No bread?

FILIPPO. Half a breakfast for a rat!

COUNT. Milk?

FILIPPO. Three laps for a cat!

COUNT. Cheese?

FILIPPO. A supper for twelve mites.

COUNT. Eggs?

FILIPPO. One, but addled.

COUNT. No bird?

FILIPPO. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

COUNT. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

FILIPPO. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

COUNT. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,
For he return'd to the rich father; I
But add my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make
Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds
Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.
(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yestereven?
To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us down
Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by* FILIPPO.

ELISABETTA. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it 's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I 'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the* LADY GIOVANNA *enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[LADY GIOVANNA *moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*

LADY GIOVANNA. Can I speak with the Count?

ELISABETTA. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I 've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would

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send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did—and he is so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it 's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages.

[*Raises her hands.*

LADY GIOVANNA. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

ELISABETTA (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

LADY GIOVANNA. Where is the Count?

ELISABETTA. Just gone
To fly his falcon.

LADY GIOVANNA. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.

ELISABETTA. Holy mother!
To breakfast! O sweet saints! one plate of prunes!
Well, madam, I will give your message to him.

[*Exit.*

LADY GIOVANNA. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,

The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—
Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—
His one companion here—nay, I have heard
That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,
[*Shows diamond necklace.*
He hath become so beggar'd that his falcon
Even wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but, truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?
[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*
O my sick boy!
My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say,
What can I do—what can I get for thee?
He answers, "Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well." Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love—
To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.
His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,
Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I—
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—
How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?
[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*

Re-enter COUNT *and* FILIPPO. COUNT *turns to* FILIPPO.

COUNT. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.
FILIPPO. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.
COUNT. Do what I said!
[*Advances and bows low.*
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.
LADY GIOVANNA. And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.
COUNT. 'T is long since we have met!
LADY GIOVANNA. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.
COUNT. I am much honour'd—yes—
[*Turns to* FILIPPO.
Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?
FILIPPO. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow!
[*Exit.*
COUNT. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.
LADY GIOVANNA. In cottage or in palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.

COUNT. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

LADY GIOVANNA. Yet I come
To ask a gift. [*Moves toward him a little.*

COUNT. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.

LADY GIOVANNA. But my boy—
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!

COUNT. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes—your boy?

LADY GIOVANNA. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

COUNT. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough;
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.

LADY GIOVANNA. O yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.

COUNT. How charm'd he was! what wonder?—A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

LADY GIOVANNA (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her at?

COUNT. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.
I had no heart to part with her for money.

LADY GIOVANNA. No, not for money.

[COUNT *turns away and sighs.*

Wherefore do you sigh?

COUNT. I have lost a friend of late.

LADY GIOVANNA. I could sigh with you
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;
And if he leave me—all the rest of life—
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.

[*Looking at wreath on wall.*

COUNT. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*

LADY GIOVANNA. And yet I never saw
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

COUNT (*holding wreath toward her*). Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?

LADY GIOVANNA. How long ago was that?

COUNT. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.

The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,
And softly placed the chaplet on her head.
A colour, which has colour'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;
And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*

LADY GIOVANNA (*after pause*). How long since do you say?

COUNT. That was the very year before you married.

LADY GIOVANNA. When I was married you were at the wars.

COUNT. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*

LADY GIOVANNA. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumour then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

COUNT. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

LADY GIOVANNA. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

COUNT. No, no, not quite, madonna, not yet, not yet.

Re-enter FILIPPO.

FILIPPO. My lord, a word with you.

COUNT. Pray, pardon me!

[LADY GIOVANNA *crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*

COUNT (*to* FILIPPO). What is it, Filippo?

FILIPPO. Spoons, your lordship.

COUNT. Spoons!

FILIPPO. Yes, my lord, for was n't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

COUNT. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

FILIPPO. Half o' one, my lord!

COUNT. How half of one?

FILIPPO. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

COUNT. And the other nine?

FILIPPO. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lord-

ship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

COUNT. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean. [*Exit* FILIPPO.

LADY GIOVANNA. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What 's here? a scroll
Pinn'd to the wreath.
My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

COUNT. Ay, if you will.

LADY GIOVANNA. It should be if you can. (*Reads.*)
"Dead mountain." Nay, for who could trace a hand
So wild and staggering?

COUNT. This was penn'd, madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

LADY GIOVANNA. O heavens! the very letters seem to shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,
Tell me the words—or better—for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,

Repeat them to their music.

COUNT. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

LADY GIOVANNA. That is musically said.

[COUNT *takes guitar.* LADY GIOVANNA *sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*

COUNT (*sings, playing guitar*). "Dead mountain flowers, dead mountain-meadow flowers,
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,
To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers."

Enter ELISABETTA *with cloth.*

ELISABETTA. A word with you, my lord!

COUNT (*singing*). "O mountain flowers!"

ELISABETTA (*louder*). A word, my lord!

COUNT (*sings*). "Dead flowers!"

ELISABETTA (*louder*). A word, my lord!

COUNT. I pray you pardon me again!

[LADY GIOVANNA *looking at wreath.*

COUNT (*to* ELISABETTA). What is it?

ELISABETTA. My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

COUNT. Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor
Fetch'd from the farthest east—we never use it
For fear of breakage—but this day has brought
A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

ELISABETTA. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord; it is broken!

COUNT. My one thing left of value in the world!
No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

ELISABETTA (*pointing thro' window*). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

COUNT. And yet, to speak white truth, my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

ELISABETTA. How can your lordship say so? There, my lord! [*Lays cloth.*
O my dear son, be not unkind to me.
And one word more. [*Going—returns.*

COUNT (*touching guitar*). Good! let it be but one.

ELISABETTA. Hath she return'd thy love?

COUNT. Not yet!

ELISABETTA. And will she?

COUNT (*looking at* LADY GIOVANNA). I scarce believe it!

ELISABETTA. Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*

COUNT (*sings*). "Dead mountain flowers"—
Ah well, my nurse has broken
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken
My china bowl. My memory is as dead.
[*Goes and replaces guitar.*
Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.
So by your leave, if you would hear the rest,
The writing.

LADY GIOVANNA (*holding wreath toward him*). There!
my lord, you are a poet,
And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

COUNT. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?
[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches* LADY GIOVANNA'S *hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

LADY GIOVANNA (*with dignity*). I did not say, my
lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO *with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*

FILIPPO. Here 's a fine salad for my lady, for tho'

we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank thee, good Filippo.

[*Exit* FILIPPO.

Enter ELISABETTA *with bird on a dish which she places on table.*

ELISABETTA (*close to table*). Here 's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank you, my good nurse.

FILIPPO (*re-entering with plate of prunes*). And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[*Puts plate on table.*

ELISABETTA. Filippo.

LADY GIOVANNA (COUNT *leads her to table*). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

COUNT. I cannot;
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine!
Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table;* FILIPPO *brings flask, fills the* COUNT'S *goblet, then* LADY GIOVANNA'S; ELISABETTA *stands at the back of* LADY GIOVANNA'S *chair.*

COUNT. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.
We lie too deep down in the shadow here.
Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*

LADY GIOVANNA. If I might send you down a flask or two
Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound the wine
Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.

FILIPPO (*coming forward*). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

ELISABETTA. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

FILIPPO. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

COUNT. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten—they were ten to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
Ta'en in the fight—

FILIPPO. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd—

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

COUNT. A troop of horse—

FILIPPO. Five hundred!

COUNT. Say fifty!

FILIPPO. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

FILIPPO. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

COUNT. We may have left their fifty less by five.
However, staying not to count how many.
But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.
I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;
It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
His death to the charm in it.

ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!

COUNT. I cannot tell how long we strove before
Our horses fell beneath us; down we went
Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot. The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
The truest service, had a touch of frost
That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.
My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.
They left us there for dead!

ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!

FILIPPO. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. I see, Filippo!

FILIPPO. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

LADY GIOVANNA. And why, Filippo?

[*Smiling absently.*

FILIPPO. I left him there for dead too.

ELISABETTA. She smiles at him—how hard the woman is!
My lady, if your ladyship were not
Too proud to look upon the garland, you
Would find it stain'd—

COUNT (*rising*). Silence, Elisabetta!

ELISABETTA. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever
Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

LADY GIOVANNA (*rising slowly*). I can eat no more!

COUNT. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

LADY GIOVANNA. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You, know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.
My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in heaven, where all is well.

[ELISABETTA *clears table of bird and salad:* FILIPPO *snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to* LADY GIOVANNA.

FILIPPO. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship—

LADY GIOVANNA. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more alone?

COUNT. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go.

FILIPPO. But the prunes that your lordship—

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

COUNT. Ay, prune our company of thine own, and go!

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

FILIPPO (*turning*). Well, well! the women! [*Exit.*

COUNT. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

ELISABETTA (*folding up cloth and going*). And me

too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to* Lady Giovanna, *then exit.* Lady Giovanna *takes out diamond necklace from casket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your good nurse;
these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.
My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honour'd and long-worshipt lady,
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection—can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to take back your diamonds—

[*Offering necklace.*

I doubt not they are yours. No other heart
Of such magnificence in courtesy
Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them.

[Count *draws back.*

If the phrase

"Return" displease you, we will say—exchange them
For your—for your—

COUNT (*takes a step toward her and then back*). For mine—and what of mine?

LADY GIOVANNA. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

COUNT. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!

For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother—but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

COUNT. Sure?

LADY GIOVANNA. Yes!

COUNT. Is this your brother's order?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!

For he would marry me to the richest man
In Florence; but I think you know the saying—
"Better a man without riches, than riches without a man."

COUNT. A noble saying—and acted on would yield
A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* LADY GIOVANNA *places necklace on table.*

And be you

Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.

LADY GIOVANNA. Then keep your wreath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

COUNT. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.

LADY GIOVANNA. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.

COUNT. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The gittern to some purpose.

LADY GIOVANNA. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that—and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

COUNT. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once
The wildest of the random youth of Florence

Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.

LADY GIOVANNA. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make
Allowance for a mother—her—who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but to-day
I dared not—so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: "I should be well again
If the good Count would give me—"

COUNT. Give me—

LADY GIOVANNA. "His falcon."

COUNT (*starts back*). My falcon!

LADY GIOVANNA. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!

COUNT. Alas, I cannot!

LADY GIOVANNA. Cannot? Even so
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?
The boy may die; more blessed were the rags
Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms

For her sick son, if he were like to live,
Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
I was to blame—the love you said you bore me—
My lord, we thank you for your entertainment,
[*With a stately curtsey.*
And so return—Heaven help him!—to our son.
[*Turns.*

COUNT (*rushes forward*). Stay, stay, I am most unlucky, most unhappy!
You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
I had but emptiness to set before you,
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it—she died for you.
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
Will thank me for your entertainment now.

LADY GIOVANNA (*returning*). I bear with him no longer.

COUNT. No, madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he may.

LADY GIOVANNA. I break with him for ever!

COUNT. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you for ever.

LADY GIOVANNA. You? you? not you! My brother!
my hard brother!
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo!
[*Falls at his feet.*
COUNT (*impetuously*). Why, then the dying of my
noble bird
Hath served me better than her living—then
[*Takes diamonds from table.*
These diamonds are both yours and mine—have
won
Their value again—beyond all markets—there,
I lay them for the first time round your neck.
[*Lays necklace round her neck.*
And then this chaplet—No more feuds, but peace,
Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle—
[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*
—crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.
[*Places wreath on her head.*
Rise—I could almost think that the dead gar-
land
Will break once more into the living blossom.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[*Raises her with both hands.*
We two together

Will help to heal your son—your son and mine—
We shall do it—we shall do it!

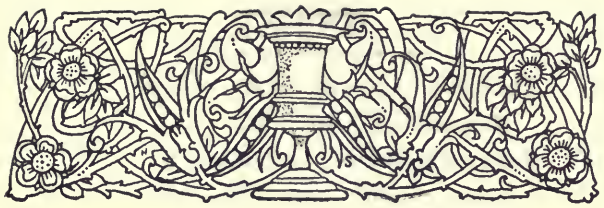
[*Embraces her.*

The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy!

LADY GIOVANNA. And I too, Federigo.

Appendix

Selections from "Poems by Two Brothers"



Memory

"The memory is perpetually looking back when we have nothing present to entertain us: it is like those repositories in animals that are filled with stores of food, on which they may ruminate when their present pasture fails."—Addison.

MEMORY! dear enchanter!
Why bring back to view
Dreams of youth, which banter
All that e'er was true?

Why present before me
Thoughts of years gone by,
Which, like shadows o'er me,
Dim in distance fly?

Days of youth, now shaded
By twilight of long years,
Flowers of youth, now faded,
Though bathed in sorrow's tears:

Memory

Thoughts of youth, which waken
  Mournful feelings now,
Fruits which time hath shaken
  From off their parent bough:

Memory! why, oh why,
  This fond heart consuming,
Shew me years gone by,
  When those hopes were blooming?

Hopes which now are parted,
  Hopes which then I priz'd,
Which this world, cold-hearted,
  Ne'er has realis'd?

I knew not then its strife,
  I knew not then its rancour;
In every rose of life,
  Alas! there lurks a canker.

Round every palm-tree, springing
  With bright fruit in the waste,
A mournful asp is clinging,
  Which sours it to our taste.

O'er every fountain, pouring
  Its waters thro' the wild,
Which man imbibes, adoring,
  And deems it undefil'd,

Memory

The poison-shrubs are dropping
  Their dark dews day by day;
And Care is hourly lopping
  Our greenest boughs away!

Ah! these are thoughts that grieve me
  Then, when others rest.
Memory! why deceive me
  By thy visions blest?

Why lift the veil, dividing
  The brilliant courts of spring—
Where gilded shapes are gliding
  In fairy colouring—

From age's frosty mansion,
  So cheerless and so chill?
Why bid the bleak expansion
  Of past life meet us still?

Where 's now that peace of mind
  O'er youth's pure bosom stealing,
So sweet and so refin'd,
  So exquisite a feeling?

Where 's now the heart exulting
  In pleasure's buoyant sense,
And gaiety, resulting
  From conscious innocence?

Memory

All, all have past and fled,
  And left me lorn and lonely;
All those dear hopes are dead,
  Remembrance wakes them only!

I stand like some lone tower
  Of former days remaining,
Within whose place of power
  The midnight owl is plaining;—

Like oak-tree old and grey,
  Whose trunk with age is failing,
Thro' whose dark boughs for aye
  The winter winds are wailing.

Thus, Memory, thus thy light
  O'er this worn soul is gleaming,
Like some far fire at night
  Along the dun deep streaming.

The Exile's Harp

I WILL hang thee, my Harp, by the side of the fountain,
On the whispering branch of the lone-waving willow:
Above thee shall rush the hoarse gale of the mountain,
Below thee shall tumble the dark breaking billow.
The winds shall blow by thee, abandon'd, forsaken,
The wild gales alone shall arouse thy sad strain;
For where is the heart or the hand to awaken
The sounds of thy soul-soothing sweetness again?
Oh! Harp of my fathers!
Thy chords shall decay,
One by one with the strings
Shall thy notes fade away;
Till the fiercest of tempests
Around thee may yell,
And not waken one sound
Of thy desolate shell!

Yet, oh! yet, ere I go, will I fling a wreath round thee,
With the richest of flowers in the green valley springing,
Those that see shall remember the hand that hath crown'd thee,
When, wither'd and dead, to thee still they are clinging.
There! now I have wreath'd thee—the roses are twining
Thy chords with their bright blossoms glowing and red:
Though the lapse of one day see their freshness declining,
Yet bloom for one day when thy minstrel has fled!
Oh! Harp of my fathers!
No more in the hall,
The souls of the chieftains
Thy strains shall enthral:
One sweep will I give thee,
And wake thy bold swell;
Then, thou friend of my bosom,
For ever farewell!

"Why Should We Weep for Those Who Die?"

"Quamobrem si dolorum finem mors affert, si securioris et melioris initium vitæ: si futura mala avertit—cur eam tantopere accusare, ex qua potius consolationem et lætitiam haurire fas esset?"—CICERO.

WHY should we weep for those who die?
They fall—their dust returns to dust;
Their souls shall live eternally
Within the mansions of the just.

They die to live—they sink to rise,
They leave this wretched mortal shore;
But brighter suns and bluer skies
Shall smile on them for evermore.

Why should we sorrow for the dead?
Our life on earth is but a span;
They tread the path that all must tread,
They die the common death of man.

Why Should We Weep?

The noblest songster of the gale
  Must cease, when Winter's frowns appear;
The reddest rose is wan and pale,
  When Autumn tints the changing year.

The fairest flower on earth must fade,
  The brightest hopes on earth must die:
Why should we mourn that man was made
  To droop on earth, but dwell on high?

The soul, th' eternal soul, must reign
  In worlds devoid of pain and strife;
Then why should mortal man complain
  Of death, which leads to happier life?

Remorse

"— sudant tacita præcordia culpa."—JUVENAL.

OH! 't is a fearful thing to glance
Back on the gloom of mis-spent years:
What shadowy forms of guilt advance,
And fill me with a thousand fears!
The vices of my life arise,
Pourtray'd in shapes, alas! too true;
And not one beam of hope breaks through,
To cheer my old and aching eyes,
T' illume my night of wretchedness,
My age of anguish and distress.
If I am damn'd, why find I not
Some comfort in this earthly spot?
But no! this world and that to come
Are both to me one scene of gloom!
Lest ought of solace I should see,
Or lose the thoughts of what I do,
Remorse, with soul-felt agony,

Holds up the mirror to my view.
And I was cursed from my birth,
A reptile made to creep on earth,
An hopeless outcast, born to die
A living death eternally!
With too much conscience to have rest,
Too little to be ever blest,
To yon vast world of endless woe,
Unlighted by the cheerful day,
My soul shall wing her weary way;
To those dread depths where aye the same,
Throughout the waste of darkness, glow
The glimmerings of the boundless flame.
And yet I cannot here below
Take my full cup of guilt, as some,
And laugh away my doom to come.
I would I 'd been all-heartless! then
I might have sinn'd like other men;
But all this side the grave is fear,
A wilderness so dank and drear,
That never wholesome plant would spring;
And all behind—I dare not think!
I would not risk th' imagining—
From the full view my spirits shrink;
And starting backwards, yet I cling
To life, whose every hour to me
Hath been increase of misery.
But yet I cling to it, for well

Remorse

I know the pangs that rack me now
Are trifles, to the endless hell
That waits me, when my burning brow
And my wrung eyes shall hope in vain
For one small drop to cool the pain,
The fury of that madd'ning flame
That then shall scorch my writhing frame!
Fiends! who have goaded me to ill!
Distracting fiends, who goad me still!
If e'er I work'd a sinful deed,
Ye know how bitter was the draught;
Ye know my inmost soul would bleed,
And ye have look'd at me and laugh'd,
Triumphing that I could not free
My spirit from your slavery!
Yet is there that in me which says,
Should these old feet their course retread
From out the portal of my days,
That I should lead the life I 've led:
My agony, my torturing shame,
My guilt, my errors all the same!
Oh, God! that thou wouldst grant that ne'er
My soul its clay-cold bed forsake,
That I might sleep, and never wake
Unto the thrill of conscious fear;
For when the trumpet's piercing cry
Shall burst upon my slumb'ring ear,
And countless seraphs throng the sky,

Remorse

How shall I cast my shroud away,
And come into the blaze of day?
How shall I brook to hear each crime,
Here veil'd by secrecy and time,
Read out from thine eternal book?
  How shall I stand before thy throne,
    While earth shall like a furnace burn?
How shall I bear the with'ring look
    Of men and angels, who will turn
  Their dreadful gaze on me alone?

The Dell of E—

"Tantum ævi longinqua valet mutare vetustas!"—VIRGIL.

THERE was a long, low, rushy dell, emboss'd
With knolls of grass and clumps of copse-wood green;
Mid-way a wandering burn the valley cross'd,
And streak'd with silvery line the wood-land scene;
High hills on either side to heaven upsprung,
Y-clad with groves of undulating pine,
Upon whose heads the hoary vapours hung,
And far—far off the heights were seen to shine
In clear relief against the sapphire sky,
And many a blue stream wander'd thro' the shade
Of those dark groves that clomb the mountains high,
And glistening 'neath each lone entangled glade,
At length with brawling accent loudly fell
Within the limpid brook that wound along the dell.

The Dell of E—

How pleasant was the ever-varying light
Beneath that emerald coverture of boughs!
How often, at th' approach of dewy night,
Have those tall pine-trees heard the lover's vows!
How many a name was carv'd upon the trunk
Of each old hollow willow-tree, that stoop'd
To lave its branches in the brook, and drunk
Its freshening dew! How many a cypress droop'd
From those fair banks, where bloom'd the earliest flowers,
Which the young year from her abounding horn
Scatters profuse within her secret bowers!
What rapturous gales from that wild dell were borne!
And, floating on the rich spring breezes, flung
Their incense o'er that wave on whose bright banks they sprung!

Long years had past, and there again I came,
But man's rude hand had sorely scath'd the dell;
And though the cloud-capped mountains, still the same,
Uprear'd each heaven-invading pinnacle;
Yet were the charms of that lone valley fled,
And the grey-winding of the stream was gone;
The brook, once murmuring o'er its pebbly bed,
Now deeply—straightly—noiselessly went on.
Slow turn'd the sluggish wheel beneath its force,

The Dell of E—

Where clattering mills disturb'd the solitude:
Where was the prattling of its former course?
Its shelving, sedgy sides y-crown'd with wood?
The willow trunks were fell'd, the names eras'd
From one broad shattered pine, which still its station
grac'd.

Remnant of all its brethren, there it stood,
Braving the storms that swept the cliffs above,
Where once, throughout th' impenetrable wood,
Were heard the plainings of the pensive dove.
But man had bid th' eternal forests bow
That bloom'd upon the earth-imbedded base
Of the strong mountain, and perchance they now
Upon the billows were the dwelling-place
Of their destroyers, and bore terror round
The trembling earth:—ah! lovelier, had they still
Whisper'd unto the breezes with low sound,
And greenly flourish'd on their native hill,
And flinging their proud arms in state on high,
Spread out beneath the sun their glorious canopy!

Antony to Cleopatra

O, CLEOPATRA! fare thee well,
We two can meet no more;
This breaking heart alone can tell
The love to thee I bore.
But wear not thou the conqueror's chain
Upon thy race and thee;
And though we ne'er can meet again,
Yet still be true to me:
For I for thee have lost a throne,
To wear the crown of love alone.

Fair daughter of a regal line!
To thraldom bow not tame;
My every wish on earth was thine,
My every hope the same.
And I have mov'd within thy sphere,
And liv'd within thy light;
And oh! thou wert to me so dear,
I breath'd but in thy sight!

Antony to Cleopatra

A subject world I lost for thee,
For thou wert all my world to me!

Then when the shriekings of the dying
  Were heard along the wave,
Soul of my soul! I saw thee flying;
  I follow'd thee, to save.
The thunder of the brazen prows
  O'er Actium's ocean rung;
Fame's garland faded from my brows,
  Her wreath away I flung.
I sought, I saw, I heard but thee:
For what to love was victory?

Thine on the earth, and on the throne,
  And in the grave, am I;
And, dying, still I am thine own,
  Thy bleeding Antony.
How shall my spirit joy to hear
  That thou art ever true!
Nay—weep not—dry that burning tear,
  That bathes thine eyes' dark hue.
Shades of my fathers! lo! I come;
I hear your voices from the tomb!

"I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow"

I WANDER in darkness and sorrow,
Unfriended, and cold, and alone,
As dismally gurgles beside me
The bleak river's desolate moan.
The rise of the volleying thunder
The mountain's lone echoes repeat:
The roar of the wind is around me,
The leaves of the year at my feet.

I wander in darkness and sorrow,
Uncheer'd by the moon's placid ray;
Not a friend that I lov'd but is dead,
Not a hope but has faded away!
Oh! when shall I rest in the tomb,
Wrapt about with the chill winding sheet?
For the roar of the wind is around me,
The leaves of the year at my feet.

"I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow"

I heed not the blasts that sweep o'er me,
  I blame not the tempests of night;
They are not the foes who have banish'd
  The visions of youthful delight:
I hail the wild sound of their raving,
  Their merciless presence I greet;
Though the roar of the wind be around me,
  The leaves of the year at my feet.

In this waste of existence, for solace,
  On whom shall my lone spirit call?
Shall I fly to the friends of my bosom?
  My God! I have buried them all!
They are dead, they are gone, they are cold,
  My embraces no longer they meet;
Let the roar of the wind be around me,
  The leaves of the year at my feet!

Those eyes that glanc'd love unto mine,
  With motionless slumbers are prest;
Those hearts which once throbb'd but for me,
  Are chill as the earth where they rest.
Then around on my wan wither'd form
  Let the pitiless hurricanes beat;
Let the roar of the wind be around me,
  The leaves of the year at my feet!

"I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow"

Like the voice of the owl in the hall,
  Where the song and the banquet hav ceas'd,
Where the green weeds have mantled the hearth,
  Whence arose the proud flame of the feast;
So I cry to the storm, whose dark wing
  Scatters on me the wild-driving sleet—
"*Let the roar of the wind be around me,*
  The fall of the leaves at my feet!"

The Old Sword

OLD Sword! tho' dim and rusted
Be now thy sheeny blade,
Thy glitt'ring edge encrusted
With cankers Time hath made;
Yet once around thee swell'd the cry
Of triumph's fierce delight,
The shoutings of the victory,
The thunders of the fight!

Tho' age hath past upon thee
With still corroding breath,
Yet once stream'd redly on thee
The purpling tide of death:
What time amid the war of foes
The dastard's cheek grew pale,
As through the feudal field arose
The ringing of the mail.

The Old Sword

Old Sword! what arm hath wielded
Thy richly gleaming brand,
'Mid lordly forms who shielded
The maidens of their land?
And who hath clov'n his foes in wrath
With thy puissant fire,
And scatter'd in his perilous path
The victims of his ire?

Old Sword! whose fingers clasp'd thee
Around thy carved hilt?
And with that hand which grasp'd thee
What heroes' blood was spilt;
When fearlessly, with open hearts,
And lance to lance oppos'd,
Beneath the shade of barbed darts
The dark-ey'd warriors clos'd?

Old Sword! I would not burnish
Thy venerable rust,
Nor sweep away the tarnish
Of darkness and of dust!
Lie there, in slow and still decay,
Unfam'd in olden rhyme,
The relic of a former day,
A wreck of ancient time!

"We Meet No More"

WE meet no more—the die is cast,
The chain is broke that tied us,
Our every hope on earth is past,
And there 's no helm to guide us:
We meet no more—the roaring blast
And angry seas divide us!

And I stand on a distant shore,
The breakers round me swelling;
And lonely thoughts of days gone o'er
Have made this breast their dwelling:
We meet no more—We meet no more:
Farewell for ever, Ellen!

Written

By an Exile of Bassorah

While Sailing Down the Euphrates

THOU land of the Lily! thy gay flowers are blooming
In joy on thine hills, but they bloom not for me;
For a dark gulf of woe, all my fond hopes entombing,
Has roll'd its black waves 'twixt this lone heart and thee.

The far-distant hills, and the groves of my childhood,
Now stream in the light of the sun's setting ray;
And the tall-waving palms of my own native wildwood
In the blue haze of distance are melting away.

By an Exile of Bassorah

I see thee, Bassorah! in splendour retiring.
Where thy waves and thy walls in their majesty meet;
I see the bright glory thy pinnacles firing,
And the broad vassal river that rolls at thy feet.

I see thee but faintly—thy tall towers are beaming
On the dusky horizon so far and so blue;
And minaret and mosque in the distance are gleaming,
While the coast of the stranger expands on my view.

I see thee no more: for the deep waves have parted
The land of my birth from her desolate son;
And I am gone from thee, though half broken-hearted,
To wander thro' climes where thy name is unknown.

Farewell to my harp, which I hung in my anguish
On the lonely palmetto that nods to the gale;
For its sweet-breathing tones in forgetfulness languish,
And around it the ivy shall weave a green veil.

Farewell to the days which so smoothly have glided
With the maiden whose look was like Cama's young glance,
And the sheen of whose eyes was the load-star which guided
My course on this earth thro' the storms of mischance!

The Vale of Bones

"Albis informem—ossibus agrum."—HORACE.

ALONG yon vapour-mantled sky
The dark-red moon is riding high;
At times her beams in beauty break
Upon the broad and silv'ry lake;
At times more bright they clearly fall
On some white castle's ruin'd wall;
At times her partial splendour shines
Upon the grove of deep-black pines,
Through which the dreary night-breeze moans,
Above this Vale of scatter'd bones.

The low, dull gale can scarcely stir
The branches of that black'ning fir,
Which betwixt me and heav'n flings wide
Its shadowy boughs on either side,
And o'er yon granite rock uprears
Its giant form of many years.

The Vale of Bones

And the shrill owlet's desolate wail
Comes to mine ear along the gale,
As, list'ning to its lengthen'd tones,
I dimly pace the Vale of Bones.

Dark Valley! still the same art thou,
Unchang'd thy mountain's cloudy brow;
Still from yon cliffs, that part asunder,
Falls down the torrent's echoing thunder;
Still from this mound of reeds and rushes
With bubbling sound the fountain gushes;
Thence, winding thro' the whisp'ring ranks
Of sedges on the willowy banks,
Still brawling, chafes the rugged stones
That strew this dismal Vale of Bones.

Unchang'd art thou! no storm hath rent
Thy rude and rocky battlement;
Thy rioting mountains sternly pil'd,
The screen of nature, wide and wild:
But who were they, whose bones bestrew
The heather, cold with midnight dew,
Upon whose slowly-rotting clay
The raven long hath ceas'd to prey,
But, mould'ring in the moonlight air,
Their wan, white skulls show bleak and bare?
And, aye, the dreary night-breeze moans
Above them in this Vale of Bones!

The Vale of Bones

I knew them all—a gallant band,
The glory of their native land,
And on each lordly brow elate
Sate valour and contempt of fate,
Fierceness of youth, and scorn of foe,
And pride to render blow for blow.
In the strong war's tumultuous crash,
How darkly did their keen eyes flash!
How fearlessly each arm was rais'd!
How dazzlingly each broad-sword blaz'd!
Though now the dreary night-breeze moans
Above them in this Vale of Bones.

What lapse of time shall sweep away
The memory of that gallant day,
When on to battle proudly going,
Your plumage to the wild winds blowing,
Your tartans far behind ye flowing,
Your pennons rais'd, your clarions sounding,
Fiercely your steeds beneath ye bounding,
Ye mix'd the strife of warring foes
In fiery shock and deadly close?
What stampings in the madd'ning strife,
What thrusts, what stabs, with brand and knife,
What desp'rate strokes for death or life,
Were there! What cries, what thrilling groans,
Re-echo'd thro' the Vale of Bones!

The Vale of Bones

Thou peaceful Vale, whose mountains lonely,
Sound to the torrent's chiding only,
Or wild-goat's cry from rocky ledge,
Or bull-frog from the rustling sedge,
Or eagle from her airy cairn,
Or screaming of the startled hern—
How did thy million echoes waken
Amid thy caverns deeply shaken!
How with the red dew o'er thee rain'd
Thine emerald turf was darkly stain'd!
How did each innocent flower, that sprung
Thy greenly-tangl'd glades among,
Blush with the big and purple drops
That dribbled from the leafy copse!
I pac'd the valley, when the yell
Of triumph's voice had ceas'd to swell:
When battle's brazen throat no more
Rais'd its annihilating roar.
There lay ye on each other pil'd,
Your brows with noble dust defil'd;
There, by the loudly-gushing water,
Lay man and horse in mingled slaughter.
Then wept I not, thrice gallant band;
For though no more each dauntless hand
The thunder of the combat hurl'd,
Yet still with pride your lips were curl'd;
And e'en in death's o'erwhelming shade
Your fingers linger'd round the blade!

The Vale of Bones

I deem'd when gazing proudly there
Upon the fix'd and haughty air
That mark'd each warrior's bloodless face,
Ye would not change the narrow space
Which each cold form of breathless clay
Then cover'd, as on earth ye lay,
For realms, for sceptres, or for thrones—
I dream'd not on this Vale of Bones!

But years have thrown their veil between,
And alter'd is that lonely scene;
And dreadful emblems of thy might,
Stern Dissolution! meet my sight:
The eyeless socket, dark and dull,
The hideous grinning of the skull,
Are sights which Memory disowns,
Thou melancholy Vale of Bones!

"Did Not Thy Roseate Lips Outvie"

"Ulla si juris tibi pejerati
Pœna, Barine, nocuisset unquam;
Dente si nigro fieres, vel uno
Turpior ungui
Crederem."

HORACE.

DID not thy roseate lips outvie
The gay Anana's spicy bloom;
Had not thy breath the luxury,
The richness of its deep perfume—

Were not the pearls it fans more clear
Than those which grace the valved shell;
Thy foot more airy than the deer,
When startled from his lonely dell—

"Did Not Thy Roseate Lips Outvie"

Were not thy bosom's stainless whiteness,
  Where angel loves their vigils keep,
More heavenly than the dazzling brightness
  Of the cold crescent on the deep—

Were not thine eye a star might grace
  Yon sapphire concave beaming clear,
Or fill the vanish'd Pleiad's place,
  And shine for aye as brightly there—

Had not thy locks the golden glow
  That robes the gay and early east,
Thus falling in luxuriant flow
  Around thy fair but faithless breast:

I might have deem'd that thou wert she
  Of the Cumæan cave, who wrote
Each fate-involving mystery,
  Upon the feathery leaves that float,

Borne thro' the boundless waste of air,
  Wherever chance might drive along.
But she was wrinkled—thou art fair:
  And she was old—but thou art young.

Her years were as the sands that strew
  The fretted ocean-beach; but thou—
Triumphant in that eye of blue,
  Beneath thy smoothly-marble brow;

"Did Not Thy Roseate Lips Outvie"

Exulting in thy form thus moulded,
  By nature's tenderest touch design'd;
Proud of the fetters thou hast folded
  Around this fond deluded mind—

Deceivest still with practis'd look,
  With fickle vow, and well-feign'd sigh.
I tell thee, that I will not brook
  Reiterated perjury!

Alas! I feel thy deep control,
  E'en now when I would break thy chain:
But while I seek to gain thy soul,
  Ah! say—hast thou a soul to gain?

Persia

"The flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound."
MILTON.

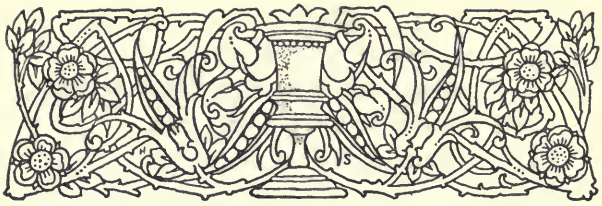
LAND of bright eye and lofty brow!
Whose every gale is balmy breath
Of incense from some sunny flower,
Which on tall hill or valley low,
In clustering maze or circling wreath,
Sheds perfume; or in blooming bower
Of Schiraz or of Ispahan,
In bower untrod by foot of man,
Clasps round the green and fragrant stem
Of lotos, fair and fresh and blue,
And crowns it with a diadem
Of blossoms, ever young and new;
Oh! lives there yet within thy soul
Ought of the fire of him who led

Thy troops, and bade thy thunder roll
O'er lone Assyria's crownless head?
I tell thee, had that conqueror red
From Thymbria's plain beheld thy fall,
When stormy Macedonia swept
Thine honours from thee one and all,
He would have wail'd, he would have wept,
That thy proud spirit should have bow'd
To Alexander, doubly proud.
Oh! Iran! Iran! had he known
The downfall of his mighty throne,
Or had he seen that fatal night,
When the young king of Macedon
In madness led his veterans on,
And Thais held the funeral light,
Around that noble pile which rose
Irradiant with the pomp of gold,
In high Persepolis of old,
Encompass'd with its frenzied foes;
He would have groan'd, he would have spread
The dust upon his laurell'd head,
To view the setting of that star,
Which beam'd so gorgeously and far
O'er Anatolia, and the fane
Of Belus, and Caïster's plain,
And Sardis, and the glittering sands
Of bright Pactolus, and the lands
Where Crœsus held his rich domain:

Persia

On fair Diarbeck's land of spice,
Adiabene's plains of rice,
Where down th' Euphrates, swift and strong,
The shield-like kuphars bound along;
And sad Cunaxa's field, where, mixing
With host to adverse host oppos'd,
'Mid clashing shield and spear transfixing,
The rival brothers sternly clos'd.
And further east, where, broadly roll'd,
Old Indus pours his stream of gold;
And there, where tumbling deep and hoarse,
Blue Ganga leaves her vaccine source;
Loveliest of all the lovely streams
That meet immortal Titan's beams,
And smile upon their fruitful way
Beneath his golden orient ray:
And southward to Cilicia's shore,
Where Cydnus meets the billows' roar,
And where the Syrian gates divide
The meeting realms on either side;
E'en to the land of Nile, whose crops
Bloom rich beneath his bounteous swell,
To hot Syene's wondrous well,
Nigh to the long-liv'd Æthiops.
And northward far to Trebizonde,
Renown'd for kings of chivalry,
Near where old Hyssus, from the strand,
Disgorges in the Euxine sea—

The Euxine, falsely nam'd, which whelms
  The mariner in the heaving tide,
To high Sinope's distant realms,
  Whence cynics rail'd at human pride.



Egypt

"Egypt's palmy groves,
Her grots, and sepulchres of kings."
MOORE's *Lalla Rookh.*

THE sombre pencil of the dim-grey dawn
Draws a faint sketch of Egypt to mine eye,
As yet uncolour'd by the brilliant morn,
And her gay orb careering up the sky.

And see! at last he comes in radiant pride,
Life in his eye, and glory in his ray;
No veiling mists his growing splendour hide,
And hang their gloom around his golden way.

The flowery region brightens in his smile,
Her lap of blossoms freights the passing gale,
That robs the odours of each balmy isle,
Each fragrant field and aromatic vale.

But the first glitter of his rising beam
  Falls on the broad-bas'd pyramids sublime,
As proud to show us with his earliest gleam,
  Those vast and hoary enemies of time.

E'en History's self, whose certain scrutiny
  Few eras in the list of Time beguile,
Pauses, and scans them with astonish'd eye,
  As unfamiliar with their aged pile.

Awful, august, magnificent, they tower
  Amid the waste of shifting sands around;
The lapse of year and month and day and hour,
  Alike unfelt, perform th' unwearied round.

How often hath yon day-god's burning light,
  From the clear sapphire of his stainless heaven,
Bath'd their high peaks in noontide brilliance bright,
  Gilded at morn, and purpled them at even!

The Druid's Prophecies

MONA! with flame thine oaks are streaming,
Those sacred oaks we rear'd on high:
Lo! Mona, lo! the swords are gleaming
Adown thine hills confusedly.

Hark! Mona, hark! the chargers' neighing!
The clang of arms and helmets bright!
The crash of steel, the dreadful braying
Of trumpets thro' the madd'ning fight!

Exalt your torches, raise your voices;
Your thread is spun—your day is brief;
Yea! Howl for sorrow! Rome rejoices,
But Mona—Mona bends in grief!

But woe to Rome, though now she raises
Yon eagles of her haughty power;
Though now her sun of conquest blazes,
Yet soon shall come her darkening hour!

The Druid's Prophecies

Woe, woe to him who sits in glory,
  Enthroned on thine hills of pride!
Can he not see the poignard gory,
  With his best heart's-blood deeply dyed?

Ah! what avails his gilded palace,
  Whose wings the seven-hill'd town enfold?
The costly bath, the crystal chalice?
  The pomp of gems—the glare of gold?

See where, by heartless anguish driven,
  Crownless he creeps 'mid circling thorns;
Around him flash the bolts of heaven,
  And angry earth before him yawns.

Then, from his pinnacle of splendour,
  The feeble king, with locks of grey,
Shall fall, and sovereign Rome shall render
  Her spectre to the usurper's sway.

Who comes with sounds of mirth and gladness,
  Triumphing o'er the prostrate dead?
Ay, me! thy mirth shall change to sadness,
  When Vengeance strikes thy guilty head.

Above thy noon-day feast suspended,
  High hangs in air a naked sword:
Thy days are gone, thy joys are ended,
  The cup, the song, the festal board.

Then shall the eagle's shadowy pinion
Be spread beneath the eastern skies;
And dazzling far with wide dominion,
Five brilliant stars shall brightly rise.

Then, coward king! the helpless aged
Shall bow beneath thy dastard blow;
But reckless hands and hearts, enraged,
By double fate shall lay thee low.

And two, with death-wounds deeply mangled,
Low on their parent-earth shall lie;
Fond wretches! ah! too soon entangled
Within the snares of royalty.

Then comes that mighty one victorious
In triumph o'er this earthly ball,
Exulting in his conquests glorious—
Ah! glorious to his country's fall!

But thou shalt see the Romans flying,
O Albyn! with yon dauntless ranks;
And thou shalt view the Romans dying,
Blue Carun! on thy mossy banks.

But lo! what dreadful visions o'er me
Are bursting on this aged eye!
What length of bloody train before me,
In slow succession passes by!

The Druid's Prophecies

Thy hapless monarchs fall together,
  Like leaves in winter's stormy ire;
Some by the sword, and some shall wither
  By light'ning's flame and fever's fire.

They come! they leave their frozen regions,
  Where Scandinavia's wilds extend;
And Rome, though girt with dazzling legions,
  Beneath their blasting power shall bend.

Woe, woe to Rome! though tall and ample
  She rears her domes of high renown;
Yet fiery Goths shall fiercely trample
  The grandeur of her temples down!

She sinks to dust; and who shall pity
  Her dark despair and hopeless groans?
There is a wailing in her city—
  Her babes are dash'd against the stones!

Then, Mona! then, though wan and blighted
  Thy hopes be now by Sorrow's dearth,
Then all thy wrongs shall be requited—
  The Queen of Nations bows to earth!

The Expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindostan

"Quoi! vous allez combattre un roi, dont la puissance
Semble forcer le ciel de prendre sa défense,
Sous qui toute l'Asie a vu tomber ses rois
Et qui tient la fortune attachée à ses lois!"

RACINE'S *Alexandre.*

"Squallent populatibus agri."—CLAUDIAN.

AS the host of the locusts in numbers, in might
As the flames of the forest that redden the night,
They approach: but the eye may not dwell on the glare
Of standard and sabre that sparkle in air.

Like the fiends of destruction they rush on their way,
The vulture behind them is wild for his prey;
And the spirits of death, and the demons of wrath,
Wave the gloom of their wings o'er their desolate path.

Expedition of Nadir Shah

Earth trembles beneath them, the dauntless, the bold.
Oh! weep for thy children, thou region of gold;
For thy thousands are bow'd to the dust of the plain,
And all Delhi runs red with the blood of her slain.

For thy glory is past, and thy splendour is dim,
And the cup of thy sorrow is full to the brim;
And where is the chief in thy realms to abide,
The "Monarch of Nations," the strength of his pride?

Like a thousand dark streams from the mountain they
throng,
With the fife and the horn and the war-beating gong:
The land like an Eden before them is fair,
But behind them a wilderness dreary and bare.

The shrieks of the orphan, the lone widow's wail,
The groans of the childless, are loud on the gale;
For the star of thy glory is blasted and wan,
And wither'd the flower of thy fame, Hindostan!

The Maid of Savoy

DOWN Savoy's hills of stainless white
A thousand currents run,
And sparkle bright in the early light
Of the slowly-rising sun:
But brighter far,
Like the glance of a star
From regions above,
Is the look of love
In the eye of the Maid of Savoy!

Down Savoy's hills of lucid snow
A thousand roebucks leap,
And headlong they go when the bugles blow,
And sound from steep to steep:
But lighter far,
Like the motion of air
On the smooth river's bed,
Is the noiseless tread
Of the foot of the Maid of Savoy!

The Maid of Savoy

In Savoy's vales, with green array'd,
A thousand blossoms flower,
'Neath the odorous shade by the larches made,
In their own ambrosial bower:
But sweeter still,
Like the cedars which rise
On Lebanon's hill
To the pure blue skies,
Is the breath of the Maid of Savoy!

In Savoy's groves full merrily sing
A thousand songsters gay,
When the breath of spring calls them forth on the wing,
To sport in the sun's mild ray:
But softer far,
Like the holy song
Of angels in air,
When they sweep along,
Is the voice of the Maid of Savoy!

Midnight

'TIS midnight o'er the dim mere's lonely bosom,
Dark, dusky, windy midnight: swift are driven
The swelling vapours onward: every blossom
Bathes its bright petals in the tears of heaven.
Imperfect, half-seen objects meet the sight,
The other half our fancy must pourtray;
A wan, dull, lengthen'd sheet of swimming light
Lies the broad lake: the moon conceals her ray,
Sketch'd faintly by a pale and lurid gleam
Shot thro' the glimmering clouds: the lovely planet
Is shrouded in obscurity; the scream
Of owl is silenc'd; and the rocks of granite
Rise tall and drearily, while damp and dank
Hang the thick willows on the reedy bank.
Beneath, the gurgling eddies slowly creep,
Blacken'd by foliage; and the glutting wave,
That saps eternally the cold grey steep,
Sounds heavily within the hollow cave.

Midnight

All earth is restless—from his glossy wing
The heath-fowl lifts his head at intervals;
Wet, driving, rainy, come the bursting squalls;
All nature wears her dun dead covering.
Tempest is gather'd, and the brooding storm
Spreads its black mantle o'er the mountain's form;
And, mingled with the rising roar, is swelling,
From the far hunter's booth, the blood-hound's yelling.
The water-falls in various cadence chiming,
Or in one loud unbroken sheet descending,
Salute each other thro' the night's dark womb;
The moaning pine-trees to the wild blast bending,
Are pictured faintly thro' the chequer'd gloom;
The forests, half-way up the mountain climbing,
Resound with crash of falling branches; quiver
Their aged mossy trunks: the startled doe
Leaps from her leafy lair: the swelling river
Winds his broad stream majestic, deep, and slow.

Scotch Song

THERE are tears o' pity, an' tears o' wae,
An' tears for excess o' joy will fa';
Yet the tears o' luve are sweeter than a'!

There are sighs o' pity, an' sighs o' wae,
An' sighs o' regret frae the saul will gae;
Yet the sighs o' luve are sweeter than a'!

There 's the look o' pity, the look o' wae,
The look o' frien', an' the look o' fae;
Yet the look o' luve is sweeter than a'!

There 's the smile o' friends when they come frae far,
There 's the smile o' joy in the festive ha';
Yet the smile o' luve is sweeter than a'!

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Song

IT is the solemn even-time,
And the holy organ 's pealing:
And the vesper chime, oh! the vesper chime!
O'er the clear blue wave is stealing.

It is the solemn mingled swell
Of the monks in chorus singing:
And the vesper bell, oh! the vesper bell!
To the gale is its soft note flinging.

'T is the sound of the voices sweeping along,
Like the wind thro' a grove of larches:
And the vesper song, oh! the vesper song!
Echoes sad thro' the cloister'd arches.

Friendship

"Neque ego nunc de vulgari aut de mediocri, quæ tamen ipsa et delectat et prodest, sed de vera et perfecta loquor (amicitia) qualis eorum, qui pauci nominantur, fuit."

CICERO.

O THOU most holy Friendship! wheresoe'er
Thy dwelling be—for in the courts of man
But seldom thine all-heavenly voice we hear,
Sweet'ning the moments of our narrow span;
And seldom thy bright footsteps do we scan
Along the weary waste of life unblest,
For faithless is its frail and wayward plan,
And perfidy is man's eternal guest,
With dark suspicion link'd and shameless interest!—

'T is thine, when life has reach'd its final goal,
Ere the last sigh that frees the mind be giv'n,
To speak sweet solace to the parting soul,
And pave the bitter path that leads to heav'n:

Friendship

'T is thine, whene'er the heart is rack'd and riv'n,
By the hot shafts of baleful calumny,
When the dark spirit to despair is driv'n,
To teach its lonely grief to lean on thee,
And pour within thine ear the tale of misery.

But where art thou, thou comet of an age,
Thou phœnix of a century? Perchance
Thou art but of those fables which engage
And hold the minds of men in giddy trance.
Yet, be it so, and be it all romance,
The thought of thine existence is so bright
With beautiful imaginings—the glance
Upon thy fancied being such delight,
That I will deem thee Truth, so lovely is thy might!

"And Ask Ye Why These Sad Tears Stream?"

"Te somnia nostra reducunt."—Ovid.

AND ask ye why these sad tears stream?
Why these wan eyes are dim with weeping?
I had a dream—a lovely dream,
Of her that in the grave is sleeping.

I saw her as 't was yesterday,
The bloom upon her cheek still glowing;
And round her play'd a golden ray,
And on her brows were gay flowers blowing.

With angel-hand she swept a lyre,
A garland red with roses bound it;
Its strings were wreath'd with lambent fire
And amaranth was woven round it.

And Ask Ye Why?

I saw her mid the realms of light,
In everlasting radiance gleaming;
Co-equal with the seraphs bright,
Mid thousand thousand angels beaming.

I strove to reach her, when, behold,
Those fairy forms of bliss Elysian,
And all that rich scene wrapt in gold,
Faded in air—a lovely vision!

And I awoke, but oh! to me
That waking hour was doubly weary;
And yet I could not envy thee,
Although so blest, and I so dreary.

On Sublimity

"The sublime always dwells on great objects and terrible."
BURKE.

O TELL me not of vales in tenderest green,
The poplar's shade, the plantain's graceful tree;
Give me the wild cascade, the rugged scene,
The loud surge bursting o'er the purple sea:
On such sad views my soul delights to pore,
By Teneriffe 's peak, or Kilda's giant height,
Or dark Loffoden's melancholy shore,
What time grey eve is fading into night;
When by that twilight beam I scarce descry
The mingled shades of earth and sea and sky.

Give me to wander at midnight alone,
Through some august cathedral, where, from high,
The cold, clear moon on the mosaic stone
Comes glancing in gay colours gloriously,

On Sublimity

Through windows rich with gorgeous blazonry,
  Gilding the niches dim, where, side by side,
Stand antique mitred prelates, whose bones lie
  Beneath the pavement, where their deeds of pride
Were graven, but long since are worn away
By constant feet of ages day by day.

Then, as Imagination aids, I hear
  Wild heavenly voices sounding from the quire,
And more than mortal music meets mine ear,
  Whose long, long notes among the tombs expire,
With solemn rustling of cherubic wings,
  Round those vast columns which the roof upbear:
While sad and undistinguishable things
  Do flit athwart the moonlit windows there;
And my blood curdles at the chilling sound
Of lone, unearthly steps, that pace the hallow'd
    ground!

I love the starry spangled heav'n, resembling
  A canopy with fiery gems o'erspread,
When the wide loch with silvery sheen is trembling,
  Far stretch'd beneath the mountain's hoary head.
But most I love that sky, when, dark with storms,
  It frowns terrific o'er this wilder'd earth,
While the black clouds, in strange and uncouth forms,
  Come hurrying onward in their ruinous wrath;
And shrouding in their deep and gloomy robe
The burning eyes of heav'n and Dian's lucid globe!

On Sublimity

I love your voice, ye echoing winds, that sweep
  Thro' the wide womb of midnight, when the veil
Of darkness rests upon the mighty deep,
  The labouring vessel, and the shatter'd sail—
Save when the forked bolts of lightning leap
  On flashing pinions, and the mariner pale
Raises his eyes to heaven. Oh! who would sleep
  What time the rushing of the angry gale
Is loud upon the waters?—Hail, all hail!
Tempest and clouds and night and thunder's rending peal!

All hail, Sublimity! thou lofty one,
  For thou dost walk upon the blast, and gird
Thy majesty with terrors, and thy throne
  Is on the whirlwind, and thy voice is heard
In thunders and in shakings: thy delight
  Is in the secret wood, the blasted heath,
The ruin'd fortress, and the dizzy height,
  The grave, the ghastly charnel-house of death,
In vaults, in cloisters, and in gloomy piles,
Long corridors and towers and solitary aisles!

Thy joy is in obscurity, and plain
  Is nought with thee; and on thy steps attend
Shadows but half-distinguish'd; the thin train
  Of hovering spirits round thy pathway bend,

On Sublimity

With their low tremulous voice and airy tread,
  What time the tomb above them yawns and gapes:
For thou dost hold communion with the dead
  Phantoms and phantasies and grisly shapes;
And shades and headless spectres of Saint Mark,
Seen by a lurid light, formless and still and dark!

What joy to view the varied rainbow smile
  On Niagara's flood of matchless might,
Where all around the melancholy isle
  The billows sparkle with their hues of light!
While, as the restless surges roar and rave,
  The arrowy stream descends with awful sound,
Wheeling and whirling with each breathless wave,
  Immense, sublime, magnificent, profound!
If thou hast seen all this, and could'st not feel,
Then know, thine heart is fram'd of marble or of steel.

The hurricane fair earth to darkness changing,
  Kentucky's chambers of eternal gloom,
The swift pac'd columns of the desert ranging
  Th' uneven waste, the violent Simoom,
Thy snow-clad peaks, stupendous Gungotree!
  Whence springs the hallow'd Jumna's echoing tide,
Hoar Cotopaxi's cloud-capt majesty,
  Enormous Chimborazo's naked pride,
The dizzy Cape of winds that cleaves the sky,
Whence we look down into eternity,

On Sublimity

The pillar'd cave of Morven's giant king,
  The Yanar, and the geyser's boiling fountain,
The deep volcano's inward murmuring,
  The shadowy Colossus of the mountain;
Antiparos, where sun-beams never enter;
  Loud Stromboli, amid the quaking isles;
The terrible Maelstrom, around his centre
  Wheeling his circuit of unnumber'd miles:
These, these are sights and sounds that freeze the blood,
Yet charm the awe-struck soul which doats on solitude.

Blest be the bard, whose willing feet rejoice
  To tread the emerald green of Fancy's vales
Who hears the music of her heavenly voice,
  And breathes the rapture of her nectar'd gales!
Blest be the bard, whom golden Fancy loves,
  He strays for ever thro' her blooming bowers,
Amid the rich profusion of her groves,
  And wreathes his forehead with her spicy flowers
Of sunny radiance; but how blest is he
Who feels the genuine force of high Sublimity!

The Deity

"Immutable—immortal—infinite!"—MILTON.

WHERE is the wonderful abode,
The holy, secret, searchless shrine,
Where dwells the immaterial God,
The all-pervading and benign?

O! that he were reveal'd to me,
Fully and palpably display'd
In all the awful majesty
Of heaven's consummate pomp array'd—

How would the overwhelming light
Of his tremendous presence beam!
And how insufferably bright
Would the broad glow of glory stream!

The Deity

What tho' this flesh would fade like grass,
  Before th' intensity of day?
One glance at Him who always was,
  The fiercest pangs would well repay.

When Moses on the mountain's brow
  Had met th' Eternal face to face,
While anxious Israel stood below,
  Wond'ring and trembling at its base;

His visage, as he downward trod,
  Shone starlike on the shrinking crowd,
With lustre borrow'd from his God:
  They could not brook it, and they bow'd.

The mere reflection of the blaze
  That lighten'd round creation's Lord,
Was too puissant for their gaze;
  And he that caught it was ador'd.

Then how ineffably august,
  How passing wond'rous must He be,
Whose presence lent to earthly dust
  Such permanence of brilliancy!

The Deity

Thron'd in sequester'd sanctity,
And with transcendant glories crown'd;
With all his works beneath his eye,
And suns and systems burning round,—

How shall I hymn him? How aspire
His holy Name with song to blend,
And bid my rash and feeble lyre
To such an awless flight ascend?

Time: An Ode

I SEE the chariot, where,
Throughout the purple air,
The forelock'd monarch rides:
Arm'd like some antique vehicle for war,
Time, hoary Time! I see thy scythed car,
In voiceless majesty,
Cleaving the clouds of ages that float by,
And change their many-colour'd sides,
Now dark, now dun, now richly bright,
In an ever-varying light.
The great, the lowly, and the brave
Bow down before the rushing force
Of thine unconquerable course;
Thy wheels are noiseless as the grave,
Yet fleet as Heaven's red bolt they hurry on,
They pass above us, and are gone!

Time: An Ode

Clear is the track which thou hast past;
Strew'd with the wrecks of frail renown,
Robe, sceptre, banner, wreath, and crown,
The pathway that before thee lies,
An undistinguishable waste,
Invisible to human eyes,
Which fain would scan the various shapes which glide
In dusky cavalcade,
Imperfectly descried,
Through that intense, impenetrable shade.

Four grey steeds thy chariot draw;
In th' obdurate, tameless jaw
Their rusted iron bits they sternly champ;
Ye may not hear the echoing tramp
Of their light-bounding, windy feet,
Upon that cloudy pavement beat.
Four wings have each, which, far outspread,
Receive the many blasts of heav'n,
As with unwearied speed,
Throughout the long extent of ether driven,
Onward they rush for ever and for aye:
Thy voice, thou mighty Charioteer!
Always sounding in their ear,
Throughout the gloom of night and heat of day.

Time: An Ode

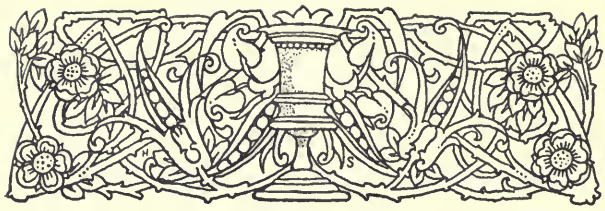
Fast behind thee follows Death,
  Thro' the ranks of wan and weeping,
That yield their miserable breath,
  On with his pallid courser proudly sweeping.
Arm'd is he in full mail,
  Bright breast-plate and high crest,
    Nor is the trenchant falchion wanting:
So fiercely does he ride the gale,
  On Time's dark car, before him, rest
    The dew-drops of his charger's panting.

On, on they go along the boundless skies,
    All human grandeur fades away
Before their flashing, fiery, hollow eyes;
      Beneath the terrible control
      Of those vast armed orbs, which roll
    Oblivion on the creatures of a day.
Those splendid monuments alone he spares,
  Which, to her deathless votaries,
Bright Fame, with glowing hand, uprears
Amid the waste of countless years.

"Live ye!" to these he crieth; "live!
To ye eternity I give—
Ye, upon whose blessed birth
  The noblest star of heaven hath shone;

Time: An Ode

Live, when the ponderous pyramids of earth
  Are crumbling in oblivion!
Live, when, wrapt in sullen shade,
The golden hosts of heaven shall fade;
Live, when yon gorgeous sun on high
Shall veil the sparkling of his eye!
Live, when imperial Time and Death himself shall
  die!"



God's Denunciations against Pharaoh-Hophra, or Apries

THOU beast of the flood, who hast said in thy soul,
"I have made me a stream that for ever shall roll!"
Thy strength is the flower that shall last but a day,
And thy might is the snow in the sun's burning ray.

Arm, arm from the east, Babylonia's son!
Arm, arm for the battle—the Lord leads thee on!
With the shield of thy fame, and the power of thy pride,
Arm, arm in thy glory—the Lord is thy guide.

Against Pharaoh-Hophra

Thou shalt come like a storm when the moonlight is
dim,
And the lake's gloomy bosom is full to the brim;
Thou shalt come like the flash in the darkness of
night,
When the wolves of the forest shall howl for affright.

Woe, woe to thee, Tanis! thy babes shall be thrown
By the barbarous hands on the cold marble-stone:
Woe, woe to thee, Nile! for thy stream shall be red
With the blood that shall gush o'er thy billowy bed!

Woe, woe to thee, Memphis! the war-cry is near,
And the child shall be toss'd on the murderer's spear;
For fiercely he comes in the day of his ire,
With wheels like a whirlwind, and chariots of fire!

The Grave of a Suicide

HARK! how the gale, in mournful notes and stern,
Sighs thro' yon grove of aged oaks, that wave
(While down these solitary walks I turn)
Their mingled branches o'er yon lonely grave!

Poor soul! the dawning of thy life was dim;
Frown'd the dark clouds upon thy natal day;
Soon rose thy cup of sorrow to the brim,
And hope itself but shed a doubtful ray.

That hope had fled and all within was gloom;
That hope had fled—thy woe to phrenzy grew;
For thou, wed to misery from the womb—
Scarce one bright scene thy night of darkness knew!

The Grave of a Suicide

Oft when the moon-beam on the cold bank sleeps,
  Where 'neath the dewy turf thy form is laid,
In silent woe thy wretched mother weeps,
  By this lone tomb, and by this oak-tree's shade.

"Oh! softly tread: in death he slumbers here;
  'T is here," she cries, "within his narrow cell!"—
The bitter sob, the wildly-starting tear,
  The quivering lip, proclaim the rest too well!

The Walk at Midnight

"Tremulo sub lumine."—VIRGIL.

SOFT, shadowy moon-beam! by thy light
Sleeps the wide mere serenely pale:
How various are the sounds of night,
Borne on the scarcely-rising gale!

The swell of distant brook is heard,
Whose far-off waters faintly roll;
And piping of the shrill small bird,
Arrested by the wand'ring owl.

Come hither! let us thread with care
The maze of this green path, which binds
The beauties of the broad parterre,
And thro' yon fragrant alley winds.

The Walk at Midnight

Or on this old bench will we sit,
  Round which the clust'ring woodbine wreathes;
While birds of night around us flit;
  And thro' each lavish wood-walk breathes,

Unto my ravish'd senses, brought
  From yon thick-woven odorous bowers,
The still rich breeze, with incense fraught
  Of glowing fruits and spangled flowers.

The whispering leaves, the gushing stream,
  Where trembles the uncertain moon,
Suit more the poet's pensive dream,
  Than all the jarring notes of noon.

Then, to the thickly-crowded mart
  The eager sons of interest press;
Then, shine the tinsel works of art—
  Now, all is Nature's loneliness!

Then, wealth aloft in state displays
  The glittering of her gilded cars;
Now, dimly stream the mingled rays
  Of yon far-twinkling, silver stars.

Yon church, whose cold grey spire appears
  In the black outline of the trees,
Conceals the object of my tears,
  Whose form in dreams my spirit sees.

The Walk at Midnight

There in the chilling bed of earth,
  The chancel's letter'd stone above—
There sleepeth she who gave me birth,
  Who taught my lips the hymn of love!

Yon mossy stems of ancient oak,
  So widely crown'd with sombre shade,
Those ne'er have heard the woodman's stroke
  Their solemn, secret depths invade.

How oft the grassy way I 've trod
  That winds their knotty boles between,
And gather'd from the blooming sod
  The flowers that flourish'd there unseen!

Rise! let us trace that path once more,
  While o'er our track the cold beams shine;
Down this low shingly vale, and o'er
  Yon rude rough bridge of prostrate pine.

Mithridates Presenting Berenice with the Cup of Poison

OH! Berenice, lorn and lost,
This wretched soul with shame is bleeding:
Oh! Berenice, I am tost
By griefs, like wave to wave succeeding.

Fall'n Pontus! all her fame is gone,
And dim the splendour of her glory;
Low in the west her evening sun,
And dark the lustre of her story.

Dead is the wreath that round her brow
The glowing hands of Honour braided;
What change of fate can wait her now,
Her sceptre spoil'd, her throne degraded?

Mithridates and Berenice

And wilt thou, wilt thou basely go,
  My love, thy life, thy country shaming,
In all the agonies of woe,
  Mid madd'ning shouts, and standards flaming?

And wilt thou, wilt thou basely go,
  Proud Rome's triumphal car adorning?
Hark! hark! I hear thee answer "No!"
  The proffer'd life of thraldom scorning.

Lone, crownless, destitute, and poor,
  My heart with bitter pain is burning;
So thick a cloud of night hangs o'er,
  My daylight into darkness turning.

Yet though my spirit, bow'd with ill,
  Small hope from future fortune borrows;
One glorious thought shall cheer me still,
  That thou art free from abject sorrows—

Art free for ever from the strife
  Of slavery's pangs and tearful anguish;
For life is death, and death is life,
  To those whose limbs in fetters languish.

Mithridates and Berenice

Fill high the bowl! the draught is thine!
  The Romans!—now thou need'st not heed them!
'T is nobler than the noblest wine—
  It gives thee back to fame and freedom!

The scalding tears my cheek bedew;
  My life, my love, my all—we sever!
One last embrace, one long adieu,
  And then farewell—farewell for ever!

The Old Chieftain

"And said I, that my limbs were old!"—Scott.

RAISE, raise the song of the hundred shells!
Though my hair is grey and my limbs are cold;
Yet in my bosom proudly dwells
The memory of the days of old;

When my voice was high, and my arm was strong,
And the foeman before my stroke would bow,
And I could have rais'd the sounding song
As loudly as I hear ye now.

For when I have chanted the bold song of death,
Not a page would have stay'd in the hall,
Not a lance in the rest, not a sword in the sheath,
Not a shield on the dim grey wall.

And who might resist the united powers
Of battle and music that day,
When, all martiall'd in arms on the heaven-kissing towers,
Stood the chieftains in peerless array?

When our enemies sunk from our eyes as the snow
Which falls down the stream in the dell,
When each word that I spake was the death of a foe,
And each note of my harp was his knell?

So raise ye the song of the hundred shells;
Though my hair is grey and my limbs are cold,
Yet in my bosom proudly dwells
The memory of the days of old!

The Fall of Jerusalem

JERUSALEM! Jerusalem!
Thou art low! thou mighty one,
How is the brilliance of thy diadem,
How is the lustre of thy throne
Rent from thee, and thy sun of fame
Darken'd by the shadowy pinion
Of the Roman bird, whose sway
All the tribes of earth obey,
Crouching 'neath his dread dominion,
And the terrors of his name!

How is thy royal seat—whereon
Sate in days of yore
Lowly Jesse's godlike son,
And the strength of Solomon,
In those rich and happy times
When the ships from Tarshish bore
Incense, and from Ophir's land,
With silken sail and cedar oar,
Wafting to Judea's strand

The Fall of Jerusalem

All the wealth of foreign climes—
How is thy royal seat o'erthrown!
Gone is all thy majesty.
Salem! Salem! city of kings,
Thou sittest desolate and lone,
Where once the glory of the Most High
Dwelt visibly enshrin'd between the wings
Of Cherubims, within whose bright embrace
The golden mercy-seat remain'd:
Land of Jehovah! view that sacred place
Abandon'd and profan'd!

Wail! fallen Salem! Wail:
Mohammed's votaries pollute thy fane;
The dark division of thine holy veil
Is rent in twain!
Thrice hath Sion's crowned rock
Seen thy temple's marble state,
Awfully, serenely great,
Towering on his sainted brow,
Rear its pinnacles of snow;
Thrice, with desolating shock,
Down to earth hath seen it driv'n
From his heights, which reach to heaven!

Wail, fallen Salem! Wail:
Though not one stone above another
There was left to tell the tale

Of the greatness of thy story,
Yet the long lapse of ages cannot smother
The blaze of thine abounding glory;
Which thro' the mist of rolling years,
O'er history's darken'd page appears,
Like the morning star, whose gleam
Gazeth thro' the waste of night,
What time old ocean's purple stream
In his cold surge hath deeply lav'd
Its ardent front of dewy light.
Oh! who shall e'er forget thy bands which brav'd
The terrors of the desert's barren reign,
And that strong arm which broke the chain
Wherein ye foully lay enslav'd,
Or that sublime Theocracy which pav'd
Your way thro' ocean's vast domain,
And on, far on to Canaan's emerald plain
Led the Israelitish crowd
With a pillar and a cloud?

Signs on earth and signs on high
Prophesied thy destiny;
A trumpet's voice above thee rung,
A starry sabre o'er thee hung;
Visions of fiery armies, redly flashing
In the many-colour'd glare
Of the setting orb of day;

And flaming chariots, fiercely dashing,
Swept along the peopled air,
In magnificent array:
The temple doors, on brazen hinges crashing,
Burst open with appalling sound,
A wond'rous radiance streaming round!

"Our blood be on our heads!" ye said:
Such your awless imprecation:
Full bitterly at length 't was paid
Upon your captive nation!
Arms of adverse legions bound thee,
Plague and pestilence stood round thee;
Seven weary suns had brighten'd Syria's sky,
Yet still was heard th' unceasing cry—
From south, north, east, and west, a voice,
"Woe unto thy sons and daughters!
Woe to Salem! thou art lost!"
A sound divine
Came from the sainted, secret, inmost shrine:
"Let us go hence!"— and then a noise—
The thunders of the parting Deity,
Like the rush of countless waters,
Like the murmur of a host!
Though now each glorious hope be blighted,
Yet an hour shall come , when ye,
Though scatter'd like the chaff, shall be
Beneath one standard once again united;

The Fall of Jerusalem

When your wandering race shall own,
Prostrate at the dazzling throne
  Of your high Almighty Lord,
  The wonders of his searchless word,
Th' unfading splendours of his Son!

Lamentation of the Peruvians

THE foes of the east have come down on our shore,
And the state and the strength of Peru are no more:
Oh! curs'd, doubly curs'd, was that desolate hour,
When they spread o'er our land in the pride of their power!
Lament for the Inca, the son of the Sun;
Ataliba 's fallen—Peru is undone!

Pizarro! Pizarro! though conquest may wing
Her course round thy banners that wanton in air;
Yet remorse to thy grief-stricken conscience shall cling,
And shriek o'er thy banquets in sounds of despair.
It shall tell thee, that he who beholds from his throne
The blood thou hast spilt and the deeds thou hast done,
Shall mock at thy fear, and rejoice at thy groan,
And arise in his wrath for the death of his son!

Lamentation of the Peruvians

Why blew ye, ye gales, when the murderer came?
Why fann'd ye the fire, and why fed ye the flame?
Why sped ye his sails o'er the ocean so blue?
Are ye also combin'd for the fall of Peru?
And thou, whom no prayers, no entreaties can bend,
Thy crimes and thy murders to heav'n shall ascend:
For vengeance the ghosts of our forefathers call;
At thy threshold, Pizarro, in death shalt thou fall!
Ay there—even there in the halls of thy pride,
With the blood of thine heart shall thy portals be dyed!

Lo! dark as the tempests that frown from the north,
From the cloud of past time Manco Capac looks forth—
Great Inca! to whom the gay day-star gave birth,
Whose throne is the heaven, and whose footstool the earth—
His visage is sad as the vapours that rise
From the desolate mountain of fire to the skies;
But his eye flashes flame as the lightnings that streak
Those volumes that shroud the volcano's high peak.
Hark! he speaks—bids us fly to our mountains, and cherish
Bold freedom's last spark ere for ever it perish;
Bids us leave these wild condors to prey on each other,
Each to bathe his fierce beak in the gore of his brother!

Lamentation of the Peruvians

This symbol we take of our godhead the Sun,
And curse thee and thine for the deeds thou hast done.
May the curses pursue thee of those thou hast slain,
Of those that have fallen in war on the plain,
When we went forth to greet ye—but foully ye threw
Your dark shots of death on the sons of Peru.
May the curse of the widow—the curse of the brave—
The curse of the fatherless, cleave to thy grave!
And the words which they spake with their last dying
breath,
Embitter the pangs and the tortures of death!

May he that assists thee be childless and poor,
With famine behind him, and death at his door:
May his nights be all sleepless, his days spent alone,
And ne'er may he list to a voice but his own!
Or, if he shall sleep, in his dreams may he view
The ghost of our Inca, the fiends of Peru:
May the flames of destruction that here he has spread
Be tenfold return'd on his murderous head!

"The Sun Goes Down in the Dark Blue Main"

"Irreparabile tempus."—VIRGIL.

THE sun goes down in the dark blue main,
To rise the brighter to-morrow;
But oh! what charm can restore again
Those days now consign'd to sorrow?

The moon goes down on the calm still night,
To rise sweeter than when she parted;
But oh! what charm can restore the light
Of joy to the broken-hearted?

The blossoms depart in the wintry hour,
To rise in vernal glory;
But oh! what charm can restore the flower
Of youth to the old and hoary?

On a Dead Enemy

"Non odi mortuum."—CICERO.

I CAME in haste with cursing breath,
And heart of hardest steel;
But when I saw thee cold in death,
I felt as man should feel.

For when I look upon that face,
That cold, unheeding, frigid brow,
Where neither rage nor fear has place,
By Heaven! I cannot hate thee now!

The Duke of Alva's Observation on Kings

KINGS, when to private audience they descend,
And make the baffled courtier their prey,
Do use an orange, as they treat a friend—
Extract the juice, and cast the rind away.

When thou art favour'd by thy sovereign's eye,
Let not his glance thine inmost thoughts discover;
Or he will scan thee through, and lay thee by,
Like some old book which he has read all over.

"Ah! Yes, the Lip May Faintly Smile"

AH! yes the lip may faintly smile,
The eye may sparkle for a while;
But never from that wither'd heart
The consciousness of ill shall part!

That glance, that smile of passing light,
Are as the rainbow of the night;
But seldom seen, it dares to bloom
Upon the bosom of the gloom.

Its tints are sad and coldly pale,
Dim-glimmering thro' their misty veil;
Unlike the ardent hues which play
Along the flowery bow of day.

The moon-beams sink in dark-rob'd shades,
Too soon the airy vision fades;
And double night returns, to shroud
The volumes of the showery cloud.

"Thou Camest to Thy Bower, My Love, Across the Musky Grove"

"Virgo egregia forma."—TERENCE.

THOU camest to thy bower, my love, across the musky grove,
To fan thy blooming charms within the coolness of the shade;
Thy locks were like a midnight cloud with silver moon-beams wove,
And o'er thy face the varying tints of youthful passion play'd.

Thy breath was like the sandal-wood that casts a rich perfume,
Thy blue eyes mock'd the lotos in the noon-day of his bloom;

Thou Camest to Thy Bower

Thy cheeks were like the beamy flush that gilds the
breaking day,
And in th' ambrosia of thy smiles the god of rapture
lay.

Fair as the cairba-stone art thou, that stone of daz-
zling white,
Ere yet unholy fingers chang'd its milk-white hue
to night;
And lovelier than the loveliest glance from Even's
placid star,
And brighter than the sea of gold, the gorgeous
Himsagar.

In high Mohammed's boundless heaven Al Cawthor's
stream may play,
The fount of youth may sparkling gush beneath the
western ray;
And Tasnim's wave in crystal cups may glow with
musk and wine,
But oh! their lustre could not match one beauteous
tear of thine!

The Passions

"You have passions in your heart—scorpions; they sleep now—beware how you awaken them! they will sting you even to death!"—*Mysteries of Udolpho*, vol. iii.

BEWARE, beware, ere thou takest
The draught of misery!
Beware, beware, e'er thou wakest
The scorpions that sleep in thee!

The woes which thou canst not number,
As yet are wrapt in sleep;
Yet oh! yet they slumber,
But their slumbers are not deep.

Yet oh! yet while the rancour
Of hate has no place in thee,
While thy buoyant soul has an anchor
In youth's bright tranquil sea:

Yet oh! yet while the blossom
  Of hope is blooming fair,
While the beam of bliss lights thy bosom—
  O! rouse not the serpent there!

For bitter thy tears will trickle
  'Neath misery's heavy load,
When the world has put in its sickle
  To the crop which fancy sow'd.

When the world has rent the cable
  That bound thee to the shore,
And launched thee weak and unable
  To bear the billow's roar;

Then the slightest touch will waken
  Those pangs that will always grieve thee,
And thy soul will be fiercely shaken
  With storms that will never leave thee!

So beware, beware, ere thou takest
  The draught of misery!
Beware, beware, ere thou wakest
  The scorpions that sleep in thee!

The High-Priest to Alexander

"Derrame en todo el orbe de la tierra
Las armas, el furor, y nueva guerra."
La Araucana, cant. xvi.

GO forth, thou man of force!
The world is all thine own;
Before thy dreadful course
Shall totter every throne.
Let India's jewels glow
Upon thy diadem:
Go, forth to conquest go,
But spare Jerusalem.
For the God of gods, which liveth
Through all eternity,
'T is He alone which giveth
And taketh victory:
'T is He the bow that blasteth,
And breaketh the proud one's quiver;
And the Lord of armies resteth
In his Holy of Holies for ever!

The High-Priest to Alexander

For God is Salem's spear,
  And God is Salem's sword;
What mortal man shall dare
  To combat with the Lord?
Every knee shall bow
  Before his awful sight;
Every thought sink low
  Before the Lord of might.
    For the God of gods, which liveth
      Through all eternity,
    'T is He alone which giveth
      And taketh victory:
    'T is He the bow that blasteth,
      And breaketh the proud one's quiver;
    And the Lord of armies resteth
      In his Holy of Holies for ever!

On the Moonlight Shining Upon a Friend's Grave

SHOW not, O Moon! with pure and liquid beam,
That mournful spot, where Memory fears to tread;
Glance on the grove, or quiver in the stream,
Or tip the hills—but shine not on the dead:
It wounds the lonely hearts that still survive,
And after buried friends are doom'd to live.

A Contrast

DOST ask why Laura's soul is riven
By pangs her prudence can't command?
To one who heeds not she has giv'n
Her *heart*, alas! *without her hand.*

But Chloe claims our sympathy,
To wealth a martyr and a slave;
For when the knot she dar'd to tie,
Her hand without her heart she gave.

The Dying Christian

"It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind."

BYRON.

I DIE—my limbs with icy feeling
Bespeak that Death is near;
His frozen hand each pulse is stealing;
Yet still I do not fear!

There is a hope—not frail as that
Which rests on human things—
The hope of an immortal state,
And with the King of kings!

And ye may gaze upon my brow,
Which is not sad, tho' pale;
These hope-illumin'd features show
But little to bewail.

The Dying Christian

Death should not chase the wonted bloom
From off the Christian's face;
Ill prelude of the bliss to come,
Prepar'd by heavenly grace.

Lament no more—no longer weep
That I depart from men;
Brief is the intermediate sleep,
And bliss awaits me then!

"How Gaily Sinks the Gorgeous Sun Within His Golden Bed"

"Tu fais naître la lumière
Du sein de l'obscurité."

ROUSSEAU.

HOW gaily sinks the gorgeous sun within his golden bed,
As heaven's immortal azure glows and deepens into red!
How gaily shines the burnish'd main beneath that living light,
And trembles with his million waves magnificently bright!
But ah! how soon that orb of day must close his burning eye,
And night, in sable pall array'd, involve yon lovely sky!

How Gaily Sinks the Sun

E'en thus in life our fairest scenes are preludes to our
woe;
For fleeting as that glorious beam is happiness below.
But what? though evil fates may frown upon our
mortal birth,
Yet Hope shall be the star that lights our night of
grief on earth:
And she shall point to sweeter morns, when brighter
suns shall rise,
And spread the radiance of their rays o'er earth, and
sea, and skies!

"Oh! Ye Wild Winds, That Roar and Rave"

" It is the great army of the dead returning on the northern blast."

SONG OF THE FIVE BARDS IN OSSIAN.

OH! ye wild winds, that roar and rave
Around the headland's stormy brow,
That toss and heave the Baltic wave,
And bid the sounding forest bow,

Whence is your course? and do ye bear
The sighs of other worlds along,
When through the dark immense of air
Ye rush in tempests loud and strong?

Methinks, upon your moaning course
I hear the army of the dead;
Each on his own invisible horse,
Triumphing in his trackless tread.

Oh! Ye Wild Winds

For when the moon conceals her ray,
  And midnight spreads her darkest veil,
Borne on the air, and far away,
  Upon the eddying blasts they sail.

Then, then their thin and feeble bands
  Along the echoing winds are roll'd;
The bodiless tribes of other lands!
  The formless, misty sons of old!

And then at times their wailings rise,
  The shrilly wailings of the grave!
And mingle with the madden'd skies,
  The rush of wind, and roar of wave.

Heard you that sound? It was the hum
  Of the innumerable host,
As down the northern sky they come,
  Lamenting o'er their glories lost.

Now for a space each shadowy king,
  Who sway'd of old some mighty realm,
Mounts on the tempest's squally wing,
  And grimly frowns thro' barred helm.

Now each dim ghost, with awful yells,
  Uprears on high his cloudy form;
And with his feeble accent swells
  The hundred voices of the storm.

Oh! Ye Wild Winds

Why leave ye thus the narrow cell,
  Ye lords of night and anarchy!
Your robes the vapours of the dell.
  Your swords the meteors of the sky?

Your bones are whitening on the heath;
  Your fame is in the minds of men:
And would ye break the sleep of death,
  That ye might live to war again?

Switzerland

"Tous les objets de mon amour,
Nos clairs ruisseaux,
Nos hameaux,
Nos coteaux,
Nos montagnes?"

RANZ DES VACHES.

WITH Memory's eye,
Thou land of joy!
I view thy cliffs once more;
And tho' thy plains
Red slaughter stains,
'T is Freedom's blessed gore.

Thy woody dells,
And shadowy fells,
Exceed a monarch's halls;
Thy pine-clad hills,
And gushing rills,
And foaming water-falls.

Switzerland

The Gallic foe
Has work'd thee woe,
  But trumpet never scar'd thee;
How could he think
That thou would'st shrink,
  With all thy rocks to guard thee?

E'en now the Gaul,
That wrought thy fall,
  At his own triumph wonders;
So long the strife
For death and life,
  So loud our rival thunders!

O! when shall Time
Avenge the crime,
  And to our rights restore us?
And bid the Seine
Be chok'd with slain,
  And Paris quake before us?

Babylon

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground: there is no throne."

ISAIAH xlvii., 1.

BOW, daughter of Babylon, bow thee to dust!
Thine heart shall be quell'd, and thy pride shall be crush'd:
Weep, Babylon, weep! for thy splendour is past;
And they come like the storm in the day of the blast.

Howl, desolate Babylon, lost one and lone!
And bind thee in sack-cloth—for where is thy throne?
Like a wine-press in wrath will I trample thee down,
And rend from thy temples the pride of thy crown.

Though thy streets be a hundred, thy gates be all brass,
Yet thy proud ones of war shall be wither'd like grass;
Thy gates shall be broken, thy strength be laid low,
And thy streets shall resound to the shouts of the foe!

Babylon

Though thy chariots of power on thy battlements bound,
And the grandeur of waters encompass thee round;
Yet thy walls shall be shaken, thy waters shall fail,
Thy matrons shall shriek, and thy king shall be pale.

The terrible day of thy fall is at hand,
When my rage shall descend on the face of thy land;
The lances are pointed, the keen sword is bar'd,
The shields are anointed, the helmets prepar'd.

I call upon Cyrus! He comes from afar,
And the armies of nations are gather'd to war;
With the blood of thy children his path shall be red,
And the bright sun of conquest shall blaze o'er his head!

Thou glory of kingdoms! thy princes are drunk,
But their loins shall be loos'd, and their hearts shall be sunk;
They shall crouch to the dust, and be counted as slaves,
At the roll of his wheels, like the rushing of waves!

For I am the Lord, who have mightily spann'd
The breadth of the heavens, and the sea and the land;
And the mountains shall flow at my presence, and earth
Shall reel to and fro in the glance of my wrath!

Babylon

Your proud domes of cedar on earth shall be thrown,
And the rank grass shall wave o'er the lonely hearth-
stone;
And your sons and your sires and your daughters
shall bleed
By the barbarous hands of the murdering Mede!

I will sweep ye away in destruction and death,
As the whirlwind that scatters the chaff with its
breath;
And the fanes of your gods shall be sprinkled with
gore,
And the course of your stream shall be heard of no
more!

There the wandering Arab shall ne'er pitch his tent,
But the beasts of the desert shall wail and lament;
In their desolate houses the dragons shall lie,
And the satyrs shall dance, and the bittern shall cry!

Love

I

ALMIGHTY Love! whose nameless power
This glowing heart defines too well,
Whose presence cheers each fleeting hour,
Whose silken bonds our souls compel,
Diffusing such a sainted spell,

As gilds our being with the light
Of transport and of rapturous bliss,
And almost seeming to unite
The joys of other worlds to this,
The heavenly smile, the rosy kiss;—

Before whose blaze my spirits shrink,
My senses all are wrapt in thee,
Thy force I own too much, to think
(So full, so great thine ecstasy)
That thou art less than deity!

Love

Thy golden chains embrace the land,
  The starry sky, the dark blue main ;
And at the voice of thy command,
  (So vast, so boundless is thy reign)
  All nature springs to life again!

II

The glittering fly, the wondrous things
  That microscopic art descries;
The lion of the waste, which springs,
  Bounding upon his enemies;
The mighty sea-snake of the storm,
The vorticella's viewless form,

The vast leviathan, which takes
  His pastime in the sounding floods;
The crafty elephant, which makes
  His haunts in Ceylon's spicy woods—
Alike confess thy magic sway,
Thy soul-enchanting voice obey!

O! whether thou, as bards have said,
  Of bliss or pain the partial giver,
Wingest thy shaft of pleasing dread
  From out thy well-stor'd golden quiver,
O'er earth thy cherub wings extending,
Thy sea-born mother's side attending;—

Or else, as Indian fables say,
  Upon thine emerald lory riding,
Through gardens, mid the restless play
  Of fountains, in the moon-beam gliding,
Mid sylph-like shapes of maidens dancing,
Thy scarlet standard high advancing;—

Thy fragrant bow of cane thou bendest,
  Twanging the string of honey'd bees,
And thence the flower-tipp'd arrow sendest,
  Which gives or robs the heart of ease;
Camdeo, or Cupid, O be near,
To listen, and to grant my prayer!

Song

TO sit beside a crystal spring,
Cool'd by the passing zephyr's wing,
And bend my every thought to thee,
Is life, is bliss, is ecstasy!

And as within that spring I trace
Each line, each feature of my face;
The faithful mirror tells me true—
It tells me that I think of *you!*

Exhortation to the Greeks

"En illa, illa quam sæpe optastis, libertas!"—SALLUST.

AROUSE thee, O Greece! and remember the day,
When the millions of Xerxes were quell'd on their way!
Arouse thee, O Greece! let the pride of thy name
Awake in thy bosom the light of thy fame!
Why hast thou shone in the temple of glory?
Why hast thou blaz'd in those annals of fame?
For know, that the former bright page of thy story
Proclaims but thy bondage and tells but thy shame:
Proclaims from how high thou art fallen—how low
Thou art plung'd in the dark gulf of thraldom and woe!
Arouse thee, O Greece! from the weight of thy slumbers!
The chains are upon thee!—arise from thy sleep!

Exhortation to the Greeks

Remember the time when nor nations nor numbers
  Could break thy thick phalanx embodied and deep.
Old Athens and Sparta remember the morning,
  When the swords of the Grecians were red to the
    hilt:
And, the bright gem of conquest her chaplet adorning,
  Platæa rejoic'd at the blood that ye spilt!
Remember the night, when, in shrieks of affright,
  The fleets of the East in your ocean were sunk:
Remember each day, when, in battle array,
  From the fountain of glory how largely ye drunk!
For there is not aught that a freeman can fear,
  As the fetters of insult, the name of a slave;
And there is not a voice to a nation so dear,
  As the war-song of freedom that calls on the brave.

King Charles's Vision

[A Vision somewhat resembling the following, and prophetic of the Northern Alexander, is said to have been witnessed by Charles XI. of Sweden, the antagonist of Sigismund. The reader will exclaim, "Credat Judæus Apella!"]

KING CHARLES was sitting all alone,
In his lonely palace-tower,
When there came on his ears a heavy groan,
At the silent midnight hour.

He turn'd him round where he heard the sound,
But nothing might he see;
And he only heard the nightly bird
That shriek'd right fearfully.

He turn'd him round where he heard the sound,
To his casement's arched frame;
"And he was aware of a light that was there,"
But he wist not whence it came.

King Charles's Vision

He looked forth into the night,
'T was calm as night might be;
But broad and bright the flashing light
Stream'd red and radiantly.

From ivory sheath his trusty brand
Of stalwart steel he drew;
And he rais'd the lamp in his better hand,
But its flame was dim and blue.

And he open'd the door of that palace-tower,
But harsh turn'd the jarring key:
"By the Virgin's might," cried the king that night,
"All is not as it should be!"

Slow turn'd the door of the crazy tower,
And slowly again did it close;
And within and without, and all about,
A sound of voices rose.

The king he stood in dreamy mood,
For the voices his name did call;
Then on he past, till he came at last
To the pillar'd audience-hall.

Eight and forty columns wide,
Many and carv'd and tall,
(Four and twenty on each side)
Stand in that lordly hall.

King Charles's Vision

The king had been pight in the mortal fight,
And struck the deadly blow;
The king he had strode in the red, red blood,
Often, afore, and now:

Yet his heart had ne'er been so harrow'd with fear
As it was this fearful hour;
For his eyes were not dry, and his hair stood on high,
And his soul had lost its power.

For a blue livid flame, round the hall where he came,
In fiery circles ran;
And sounds of death, and chattering teeth,
And gibbering tongues began.

He saw four and twenty statesmen old
Round a lofty table sit;
And each in his hand did a volume hold,
Wherein mighty things were writ.

In burning steel were their limbs all cas'd;
On their cheeks was the flush of ire:
Their armour was brac'd, and their helmets were lac'd,
And their hollow eyes darted fire.

With sceptre of might, and with gold crown bright,
And locks like the raven's wing,
And in regal state at that board there sate
The likeness of a king.

King Charles's Vision

With crimson ting'd, and with ermine fring'd,
And with jewels spangled o'er,
And rich as the beam of the sun on the stream,
A sparkling robe he wore.

Yet though fair shone the gem on his proud diadem,
Though his robe was jewell'd o'er,
Though brilliant the vest on his mailed breast,
Yet they all were stain'd with gore!

And his eye darted ire, and his glance shot fire,
And his look was high command;
And each, when he spoke, struck his mighty book,
And rais'd his shadowy hand.

And a headman stood by, with his axe on high,
And quick was his ceaseless stroke;
And loud was the shock on the echoing block,
As the steel shook the solid oak.

While short and thick came the mingled shriek
Of the wretches who died by his blow;
And fast fell each head on the pavement red,
And warm did the life-blood flow.

Said the earthly king to the ghostly king,
"What fearful sights are those?"
Said the ghostly king to the earthly king,
"They are signs of future woes!"

King Charles's Vision

Said the earthly king to the ghostly king,
"By Saint Peter, who art thou?"
Said the ghostly king to the earthly king,
"I shall be, but I am not now."

Said the earthly king to the ghostly king,
"But when will thy time draw nigh?"
"Oh! the sixth after thee will a warrior be,
And that warrior am I.

"And the lords of the earth shall be pale at my birth,
And conquest shall hover o'er me;
And the kingdoms shall shake, and the nations shall quake,
And the thrones fall down before me.

"And Cracow shall bend to my majesty,
And the haughty Dane shall bow;
And the Pole shall fly from my piercing eye,
And the scowl of my clouded brow.

"And around my way shall the hot balls play,
And the red-tongued flames arise;
And my pathway shall be on the midnight sea,
'Neath the frown of the wintry skies.

"Thro' narrow pass, over dark morass,
And the waste of the weary plain,
Over ice and snow, where the dark streams flow,
Thro' the woods of the wild Ukraine.

King Charles's Vision

"And though sad be the close of my life and my woes,
And the hand that shall slay me unshown;
Yet in every clime, thro' the lapse of all time,
Shall my glorious conquests be known.

"And blood shall be shed, and the earth shall be red
With the gore of misery;
And swift as this flame shall the light of my fame
O'er the world as brightly fly."

As the monarch spoke, crew the morning cock,
When all that pageant bright,
And the glitter of gold, and the statesmen old,
Fled into the gloom of night!

Timbuctoo

Timbuctoo

"Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystic city, goal of high emprise."

CHAPMAN.

I STOOD upon the Mountain which o'erlooks
The narrow seas, whose rapid interval
Parts Afric from green Europe, when the Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and above
The silent heavens were blench'd with faery light,
Uncertain whether faery light or cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the chasms of deep, deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars
Were flooded over with clear glory and pale.
I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars high
Long time erased from earth: even as the Sea
When weary of wild inroad buildeth up

Huge mounds whereby to stay his yeasty waves.
And much I mused on legends quaint and old
Which whilome won the hearts of all on earth
Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame draws air;
But had their being in the heart of man
As air is th' life of flame: and thou wert then
A centr'd glory-circled memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later name,
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold:
Shadows to which, despite all shocks of change,
All on-set of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hope which would not die.
As when in some great city where the walls
Shake, and the streets with ghastly faces throng'd,
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,
Among the inner columns far retired
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,
Before the awful Genius of the place
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith, the while
Above her head the weak lamp dips and winks
Unto the fearful summoning without:
Nathless she ever clasps the marble knees,
Bathes the cold hands with tears, and gazeth on
Those eyes which wear no light but that wherewith
Her phantasy informs them.

Where are ye,
Thrones of the Western wave, fair Islands green?

Timbuctoo

Where are your moonlight halls, your cedarn glooms,
The blossoming abysses of your hills?
Your flowering capes, and your gold-sanded bays
Blown round with happy airs of odorous winds?
Where are the infinite ways, which, seraph-trod,
Wound thro' your great Elysian solitudes,
Whose lowest deeps were, as with visible love,
Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circumfused,
Flowing between the clear and polish'd stems,
And ever circling round their emerald cones
In coronals and glories, such as gird
The unfading foreheads of the Saints in Heaven?
For nothing visible, they say, had birth
In that blest ground, but it was play'd about
With its peculiar glory. Then I raised
My voice and cried, "Wide Afric, doth thy Sun
Lighten, thy hills enfold a city as fair
As those which starr'd the night o' the elder world?
Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo
A dream as frail as those of ancient time?"
  A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing light!
A rustling of white wings! the bright descent
Of a young Seraph! and he stood beside me
There on the ridge, and look'd into my face
With his unutterable, shining orbs.
So that with hasty motion I did veil
My vision with both hands, and saw before me
Such colour'd spots as dance athwart the eyes

Of those that gaze upon the noonday Sun.
Girt with a zone of flashing gold beneath
His breast, and compass'd round about his brow
With triple arch of ever-changing bows,
And circled with the glory of living light
And alternation of all hues, he stood.
"O child of man, why muse you here alone
Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of old
Which fill'd the earth with passing loveliness,
Which flung strange music on the howling winds,
And odours rapt from remote Paradise?
Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mortality;
Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of clay:
Open thine eyes and see."
I look'd, but not
Upon his face, for it was wonderful
With its exceeding brightness, and the light
Of the great Angel Mind which look'd from out
The starry glowing of his restless eyes.
I felt my soul grow mighty, and my spirit
With supernatural excitation bound
Within me, and my mental eye grew large
With such a vast circumference of thought,
That in my vanity I seem'd to stand
Upon the outward verge and bound alone
Of full beatitude. Each failing sense,
As with a momentary flash of light,
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I saw

Timbuctoo

The smallest grain that dappled the dark earth,
The indistinctest atom in deep air,
The Moon's white cities, and the opal width
Of her small glowing lakes, her silver heights
Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
And the unsounded, undescended depth
Of her black hollows. The clear galaxy
Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,
Distinct and vivid with sharp points of light,
Blaze within blaze, an unimagin'd depth
And harmony of planet-girded suns
And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,
Arch'd the wan sapphire. Nay—the hum of men,
Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
And notes of busy life in distant worlds
Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.
A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts,
Involving and embracing each with each,
Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,
Expanding momently with every sight
And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
The riven rapt brain; as when in some large lake
From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse
Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
At slender interval, the level calm
Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres
Which break upon each other, each th' effect

Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong
Than its precursor, till the eye in vain
Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
Definite round.
I know not if I shape
These things with accurate similitude
From visible objects, for but dimly now,
Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,
The memory of that mental excellence
Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine
The indecision of my present mind
With its past clearness, yet it seems to me
As even then the torrent of quick thought
Absorbed me from the nature of itself
With its own fleetness. Where is he that, borne
Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,
And muse midway with philosophic calm
Upon the wondrous laws which regulate
The fierceness of the bounding element?
My thoughts which long had grovell'd in the slime
Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house
Beneath unshaken waters, but at once
Upon some earth-awakening day of Spring
Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft
Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides

Timbuctoo

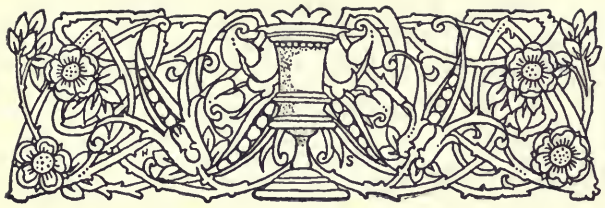
Double display of star-lit wings, which burn
Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom;
Ev'n so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt
Unutterable buoyancy and strength
To bear them upward through the trackless fields
Of undefin'd existence far and free.
  Then first within the South methought I saw
A wilderness of spires, and crystal pile
Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,
Illimitable range of battlement
On battlement, and the imperial height
Of canopy o'ercanopied.
  Behind
In diamond light upsprung the dazzling peaks
Of Pyramids, as far surpassing earth's
As heaven than earth is fairer. Each aloft
Upon his narrow'd eminence bore globes
Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances
Of either, showering circular abyss
Of radiance. But the glory of the place
Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd gold,
Interminably high, if gold it were
Or metal more ethereal, and beneath
Two doors of blinding brilliance where no gaze
Might rest, stood open, and the eye could scan,
Through length of porch and valve and boundless
    hall,
Part of a throne of fiery flame, wherefrom

The snowy skirting of a garment hung,
And glimpse of multitudes of multitudes
That minister'd around it—if I saw
These things distinctly, for my human brain
Stagger'd beneath the vision, and thick night
Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.
With ministering hand he raised me up:
Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,
Which but to look on for a moment fill'd
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
In accents of majestic melody,
Like a swoln river's gushings in still night
Mingled with floating music, thus he spake:
"There is no mightier Spirit than I to sway
The heart of man: and teach him to attain
By shadowing forth the Unattainable;
And step by step to scale that mighty stair
Whose landing-place is wrapt about with clouds
Of glory of heaven. With earliest light of Spring,
And in the glow of sallow Summertide,
And in red Autumn when the winds are wild
With gambols, and when full-voiced Winter roofs
The headland with inviolate white snow,
I play about his heart a thousand ways,
Visit his eyes with visions, and his ears
With harmonies of wind and wave and wood,—
Of winds which tell of waters, and of waters
Betraying the close kisses of the wind—

And win him unto me: and few there be
So gross of heart who have not felt and known
A higher than they see: They with dim eyes
Behold me darkling. Lo! I have given thee
To understand my presence, and to feel
My fulness; I have fill'd thy lips with power.
I have raised thee higher to the spheres of heaven,
Man's first, last home: and thou with ravish'd sense
Listenest the lordly music flowing from
Th' illimitable years. I am the Spirit,
The permeating life which courseth through
All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins
Of the great vine of Fable, which, outspread
With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters rare,
Reacheth to every corner under heaven,
Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth;
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in
The fragrance of its complicated glooms,
And cool impleached twilights. Child of man,
See'st thou yon river, whose translucent wave,
Forth issuing from the darkness, windeth through
The argent streets o' th' city, imaging
The soft inversion of her tremulous domes,
Her gardens frequent with the stately palm,
Her pagods hung with music of sweet bells,
Her obelisks of ranged chrysolite,
Minarets and towers? Lo! how he passeth by,
And gulphs himself in sands, as not enduring

To carry through the world those waves, which bore
The reflex of my city in their depths.
Oh city! oh latest throne! where I was raised
To be a mystery of loveliness
Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh come
When I must render up this glorious home
To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant towers
Shall darken with the waving of her wand;
Darken, and shrink and shiver into huts,
Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,
Low-built, mud-wall'd, barbarian settlements.
How chang'd from this fair city!"
Thus far the Spirit:
Then parted heaven-ward on the wing: and I
Was left alone on Calpe, and the moon
Had fallen from the night, and all was dark!

Poems Published in the Edition of 1830, and Omitted in Later Editions



The "How" and the "Why"

?

I AM any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor:
Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast,
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.
We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why?*

The bulrush nods unto its brother.
The wheat-ears whisper to each other:
What is it they say? what do they there?
Why two and two make four? why round is not square?

The "How" and the "Why"

Why the rock stands still, and the light clouds fly?
Why the heavy oak groans, and the white willows sigh?
Why deep is not high, and high is not deep?
Whether we wake, or whether we sleep?
Whether we sleep, or whether we die?
How you are you? why I am I?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why?*

The world is somewhat; it goes on somehow:
But what is the meaning of *then* and *now?*
I feel there is something; but how and what?
I know there is somewhat: but what and why?
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.
The little bird pipeth—"why? why?"
In the summer woods when the sun falls low,
And the great bird sits on the opposite bough,
And stares in his face, and shouts "how? how?"
And the black owl scuds down the mellow twilight,
And chants "how? how?" the whole of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt?
What the life is? where the soul may lie?
Why a church is with a steeple built:
And a house with a chimney-pot?
Who will riddle me the how and the what?
Who will riddle me the what and the why?

The Burial of Love

HIS eyes in eclipse,
Pale-cold his lips,
The light of his hopes unfed,
Mute his tongue,
His bow unstrung
With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful head
Love is dead:
His last arrow is sped;
He hath not another dart;
Go—carry him to his dark death-bed;
Bury him in the cold, cold heart—
Love is dead.

O truest love! art thou forlorn,
And unrevenged? thy pleasant wiles
Forgotten, and thine innocent joy?
Shall hollow-hearted apathy,
The cruellest form of perfect scorn,

The Burial of Love

With languor of most hateful smiles,
For ever write,
In the withered light
Of the tearless eye,
An epitaph that all may spy?
No! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
Nor the round sun shine that shineth to all;
Her light shall into darkness change;
For her the green grass shall not spring,
Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds sing
Till Love have his full revenge.

To ——

SAINTED Juliet! dearest name!
If to love be life alone,
Divinest Juliet,
I love thee, and live; and yet
Love unreturned is like the fragrant flame
Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
Offered to gods upon an altar-throne;
My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
Changed into fire, and blown about with sighs.

Song

I

I' THE glooming light
Of middle night
So cold and white,
Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave,
Beside her are laid
Her mattock and spade,
For she hath half delved her own deep grave.
Alone she is there:
The white clouds drizzle: her hair falls loose:
Her shoulders are bare;
Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

II

Death standeth by;
She will not die;
With glazed eye
She looks at her grave: she cannot sleep;

Song

Ever alone
She maketh her moan:
She cannot speak: she can only weep,
For she will not hope.
The thick snow falls on her flake by flake,
The dull wave mourns down the slope,
The world will not change, and her heart will not break.

Song

I

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock
Have voices sweet and clear;
All in the bloomed May.
They from the blosmy brere
Call to the fleeting year,
If that he would them hear
And stay.
Alas! that one so beautiful
Should have so dull an ear!

II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,
But thou art deaf as death;
All in the bloomed May.
When thy light perisheth
That from thee issueth,
Our life evanisheth:
O, stay!

Alas! that lips so cruel-dumb
Should have so sweet a breath!

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love
Thou comest, as a king,
All in the bloomed May.
Thy golden largess fling,
And longer hear us sing;
Though thou art fleet of wing,
Yet stay.
Alas! that eyes so full of light
Should be so wandering!

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen
In rings of gold yronne,
All in the bloomed May.
We prithee pass not on;
If thou dost leave the sun,
Delight is with thee gone.
O, stay!
Thou art the fairest of thy feres,
We prithee pass not on.

Song

I

EVERY day hath its night:
Every night its morn:
Thorough dark and bright
Winged hours are borne;
Ah! welaway!
Seasons flower and fade;
Golden calm and storm
Mingle day by day.
There is no bright form
Doth not cast a shade—
Ah! welaway!

II

When we laugh, and our mirth
Apes the happy vein,
We 're so kin to earth,
Pleasaunce fathers pain—
Ah! welaway!

Song

Madness laugheth loud:
  Laughter bringeth tears:
    Eyes are worn away
  Till the end of fears
Cometh in the shroud,
    Ah! welaway!

III

All is change, woe or weal;
  Joy is Sorrow's brother;
Grief and gladness steal
  Symbols of each other:
    Ah! welaway!
Larks in heaven's cope
  Sing: the culvers mourn
    All the livelong day.
  Be not all forlorn:
Let us weep in hope—
    Ah! welaway!

Hero to Leander

O GO not yet, my love!
The night is dark and vast;
The white moon is hid in her heaven above,
And the waves climb high and fast.
O, kiss me, kiss me, once again,
Lest thy kiss should be the last!
O kiss me ere we part;
Grow closer to my heart!
My heart is warmer surely than the bosom of the main.
O joy! O bliss of blisses!
My heart of hearts art thou.
Come bathe me with thy kisses,
My eyelids and my brow.
Hark how the wild rain hisses,
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy limbs,
So gladly doth it stir;
Thine eye in drops of gladness swims.
I have bathed thee with the pleasant myrrh;

Hero to Leander

Thy locks are dripping balm;
Thou shalt not wander hence to-night,
I 'll stay thee with my kisses.
To-night the roaring brine
Will rend thy golden tresses;
The ocean with the morrow light
Will be both blue and calm;
And the billow will embrace thee with a kiss as soft as mine.
No Western odours wander
On the black and moaning sea,
And when thou art dead, Leander,
My soul must follow thee!
O go not yet, my love!
Thy voice is sweet and low;
The deep salt wave breaks in above
Those marble steps below.
The turret-stairs are wet
That lead into the sea.
Leander! go not yet.
The pleasant stars have set:
O, go not, go not yet,
Or I will follow thee!

The Mystic

ANGELS have talked with him, and showed him thrones:
Ye knew him not; he was not one of ye,
Ye scorned him with an undiscerning scorn:
Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,
The still serene abstraction: he hath felt
The vanities of after and before;
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
The stern experiences of converse lives,
The linked woes of many a fiery change
Had purified, and chastened, and made free.
Always there stood before him, night and day,
Of wayward vary-coloured circumstance
The imperishable presences serene,
Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,
Dim shadows but unwaning presences
Fourfaced to four corners of the sky:
And yet again, three shadows, fronting one,
One forward, one respectant, three but one;

And yet again, again and evermore,
For the two first were not, but only seemed,
One shadow in the midst of a great light,
One reflex from eternity on time,
One mighty countenance of perfect calm,
Awful with most invariable eyes.
For him the silent congregated hours,
Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath
Severe and youthful brows, with shining eyes
Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light
Of earliest youth pierced through and through with all
Keen knowledges of low-embowed eld)
Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud
Which droops low-hung on either gate of life,
Both birth and death: he in the centre fixt,
Saw far on each side through the grated gates
Most pale and clear and lovely distances.
He often lying broad awake, and yet
Remaining from the body, and apart
In intellect and power and will, hath heard
Time flowing in the middle of the night,
And all things creeping to a day of doom.
How could ye know him? Ye were yet within
The narrower circle: he had wellnigh reached
The last, which with a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

The Grasshopper

I

VOICE of the summer wind,
Joy of the summer plain,
Life of the summer hours,
Carol clearly, bound along.
No Tithon thou as poets feign
(Shame fall 'em, they are deaf and blind),
But an insect lithe and strong,
Bowing the seeded summer flowers.
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,
Vaulting on thine airy feet.
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and strength complete;
Armed cap-a-pie
Full fair to see;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,
A gallant cavalier,

The Grasshopper

Sans peur et sans reproche,
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

II

I would dwell with thee,
Merry grasshopper,
Thou art so glad and free,
And as light as air;
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,
Thou hast no compt of years,
No withered immortality,
But a short youth sunny and free.
Carol clearly, bound along,
Soon thy joy is over,
A summer of loud song,
And slumbers in the clover.
What hast thou to do with evil
In thine hour of love and revel,
In thy heat of summer pride,
Pushing the thick roots aside
Of the singing flowered grasses,
That brush thee with their silken tresses?
What hast thou to do with evil,
Shooting, singing, ever springing
In and out the emerald glooms,
Ever leaping, ever singing,
Lighting on the golden blooms?

Love, Pride, and Forgetfulness

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb,
Love laboured honey busily.
I was the hive, and Love the bee,
My heart the honeycomb.
One very dark and chilly night
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapours went through all,
Sweet Love was withered in his cell:
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a spell
Did change them into gall;
And Memory, though fed by Pride,
Did wax so thin on gall,
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.
What marvel that she died?

Chorus

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,
The rapid waste of roving sea,
The fountain-pregnant mountains riven
To shapes of wildest anarchy,
By secret fire and midnight storms
That wander round their windy cones,
The subtle life, the countless forms
Of living things, the wondrous tones
Of man and beast are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

The day, the diamonded night,
The echo, feeble child of sound,
The heavy thunder's griding might,
The herald lightning's starry bound,
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
The naked summer's glowing birth,

Chorus

The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,
The hoarhead winter paving earth
With sheeny white, are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

Each sun which from the centre flings
Grand music and redundant fire,
The burning belts, the mighty rings,
The murm'rous planets' rolling choir
The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,
Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,
The lawless comets as they glare,
And thunder through the sapphire deeps
In wayward strength, are full of strange
Astonishment and boundless change.

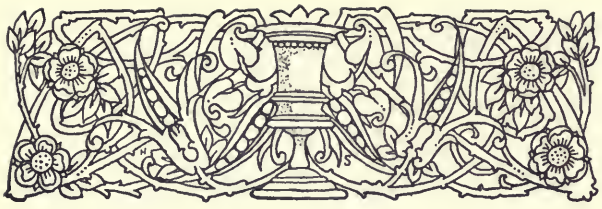
Lost Hope

YOU cast to ground the hope which once was mine:
But did the while your harsh decree deplore,
Embalming with sweet tears the vacant shrine,
My heart, where Hope had been and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout
A goodly acorn grew;
But winds from heaven shook the acorn out,
And filled the cup with dew.

The Tears of Heaven

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night till morn,
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,
Because the earth hath made her state forlorn
With self-wrought evil of unnumbered years,
And doth the fruit of her dishonour reap.
And all the day heaven gathers back her tears
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,
And showering down the glory of lightsome day,
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to win her if she may.



Love and Sorrow

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf
With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea,
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief
Doth hold the other half in sovranty.
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline:
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine:
Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine
My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart,
Issue of its own substance, my heart's night
Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,
All-powerful in beauty as thou art.
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,
Then might thy rays pass through to the other side,
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep;
They never learned to love who never knew to weep.

To a Lady Sleeping

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,
Through whose dim brain the winged dreams are borne,
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,
In honour of the silver-flecked morn;
Long hath the white wave of the virgin light
Driven back the billow of the dreamful dark.
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,
Though long ago listening the poised lark,
With eyes dropt downward through the blue serene,
Over heaven's parapet the angels lean.

Sonnet

COULD I outwear my present state of woe
With one brief winter, and indue i' the spring
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow
The wan dark coil of faded suffering—
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers
And watered valleys where the young birds sing;
Could I thus hope my lost delight's renewing,
I straightly would command the tears to creep
From my charged lids; but inwardly I weep;
Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing:
That to itself hath drawn the frozen rain
From my cold eyes, and melted it again.

Sonnet

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon,
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn whirl,
All night through archways of the bridged pearl,
And portals of pure silver, walks the moon.
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,
And dross to gold with glorious alchemy,
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.
Reign thou above the storms of sorrow and ruth
That roar beneath; unshaken peace hath won thee;
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of truth;
So shall the blessing of the meek be on thee;
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,
An honourable eld shall come upon thee.

Sonnet

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of Good,
Or propagate again her loathed kind,
Thronging the cells of the diseased mind,
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered brood,
Though hourly pastured on the salient blood?
Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold or heat
Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat
Of their broad vans, and in the solitude
Of middle space confound them, and blow back
Their wild cries down their cavern throats, and slake
With points of blast-borne hail their heated eyne!
So their wan limbs no more might come between
The moon and the moon's reflex in the night,
Nor blot with floating shades the solar light.

Sonnet

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,
Down an ideal stream they ever float,
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they strain
Weak eyes upon the glistering sands that robe
The understream. The wise, could he behold
Cathedraled caverns of thick-ribbed gold
And branching silvers of the central globe,
Would marvel from so beautiful a sight
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could flow:
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;
Pleached with her hair, in mail of argent light
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips,
And skins the colour from her trembling lips.

Love

I

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying Love,
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,
Before the face of God didst breathe and move,
Though night and pain and ruin and death reign here.
Thou foldest, like a golden atmosphere,
The very throne of the eternal God:
Passing through thee the edicts of his fear
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad
By the loud winds, though they uprend the sea,
Even from its central deeps: thine empery
Is over all; thou wilt not brook eclipse;
Thou goest and returnest to His lips
Like lightning: thou dost ever brood above
The silence of all hearts, unutterable Love.

II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old age
Is but to know thee: dimly we behold thee

Athwart the veils of evils which infold thee.
We beat upon our aching hearts in rage;
We cry for thee; we deem the world thy tomb.
As dwellers in lone planets look upon
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheedling gloom,
Making their day dim, so we gaze on thee.
Come, thou of many crowns, white-robed Love,
Oh! rend the veil in twain: all men adore thee;
Heaven crieth after thee; earth waiteth for thee;
Breathe on thy winged throne, and it shall move
In music and in light o'er land and sea.

III

And now—methinks I gaze upon thee now,
As on a serpent in his agonies
Awe-stricken Indians; what time laid low
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds he lies,
When the new year warm-breathed on the Earth,
Waiting to light him with her purple skies,
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.
Already with the pangs of a new birth
Strain the hot spheres of his convulsed eyes,
And in his writhings awful hues begin
To wander down his sable-sheeny sides,
Like light on troubled waters: from within
Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,

And in him light and joy and strength abides;
And from his brows a crown of living light
Looks through the thick-stemmed woods by day and
night.

English War-Song

WHO fears to die? Who fears to die?
Is there any here who fears to die?
He shall find what he fears; and none shall grieve
For the man who fears to die;
But the withering scorn of the many shall cleave
To the man who fears to die.

CHORUS

Shout for England!
Ho! for England!
George for England!
Merry England!
England for aye!

The hollow at heart shall crouch forlorn,
He shall eat the bread of common scorn;

English War-Song

It shall be steeped in the salt, salt tear,
Shall be steeped in his own salt tear:
Far better, far better he never were born
Than to shame merry England here.
CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Hark! he shouteth—the ancient enemy!
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise;
They stream like fire in the skies;
Hold up the Lion of England on high
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.
CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the earth are free;
The child in our cradles is bolder than he;
For where is the heart and strength of slaves?
Oh! where is the strength of slaves?
He is weak! we are strong: he a slave, we are free;
Come along! we will dig their graves.
CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Will he dare to battle with the free?
Spur along! spur amain! charge to the fight:
Charge! charge to the fight!
Hold up the Lion of England on high!
Shout for God and our right!
CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

National Song

THERE is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be,
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

CHORUS

For the French the Pope may shrive 'em.
For the devil a whit we heed 'em:
As for the French, God speed 'em
Unto their heart's desire,
And the merry devil drive 'em
Through the water and the fire.

National Song

FULL CHORUS

Our glory is our freedom,
We lord it o'er the sea;
We are the sons of freedom,
We are free.

There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.

CHO.—For the French, etc.

Dualisms

TWO bees within a crystal flower-bell rocked,
Hum a love-lay to the west-wind at noon-tide.
Both alike, they buzz together,
Both alike, they hum together,
Through and through the flowered heather.
Where in a creeping cove the wave unshocked
Lays itself calm and wide.
Over a stream two birds of glancing feather
Do woo each other, carolling together.
Both alike, they glide together,
Side by side;
Both alike, they sing together,
Arching blue-glossed necks beneath the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown the lea are singing,
As they gambol, lily-garlands ever stringing:

Dualisms

Both in blosm-white silk are frocked:
Like, unlike, they roam together
Under a summer vault of golden weather:
Like, unlike, they sing together
Side by side,
Mid-May's darling golden-locked,
Summer's tanling diamond-eyed.

The Sea Fairies

SLOW sailed the weary mariners, and saw
Between the green brink and the running foam
White limbs unrobed in a crystal air,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosom prest
To little harps of gold: and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

SONG

Whither away, whither away, whither away? Fly
no more:
Whither away wi' the singing sail? whither away
wi' the oar?
Whither away from the high green field and the happy
blossoming shore?
Weary mariners, hither away,
One and all, one and all,
Weary mariners, come and play;
We will sing to you all the day;

The Sea Fairies

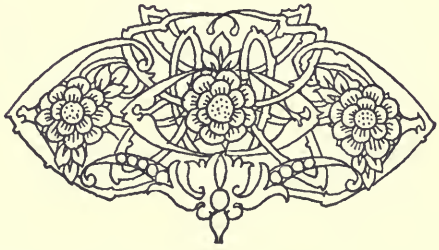
Furl the sail and the foam will fall
From the prow! One and all,
Furl the sail! Drop the oar!
Leap ashore,
Know danger and trouble and toil no more.
Whither away wi' the sail and the oar?

Drop the oar,
Leap ashore,
Fly no more!
Whither away wi' the sail? whither away wi' the oar?
Day and night to the billow the fountain calls:
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea;
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea.
Merrily carol the revelling gales
Over the islands free:
From the green seabanks the rose down-trails
To the happy brimmed sea.

Come hither, come hither and be our lords,
For merry brides are we:
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words.
Oh, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and revelry;
Oh, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten,

The Sea Fairies

When the clear sharp twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Ye will not find so happy a shore,
Weary mariners! all the world o'er;
Oh! fly no more!
Hearken ye, hearken ye, sorrow shall darken ye,
Danger and trouble and toil no more;
Whither away?
Drop the oar;
Hither away,
Leap ashore;
Oh, fly no more—no more:
Whither away, whither away, whither away with the
sail and the oar?



Οἱ ῥέοντες

I

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true,
All visions wild and strange;
Man is the measure of all truth
Unto himself. All truth is change.
All men do walk in sleep, and all
Have faith in that they dream:
For all things are as they seem to all,
And all things flow like a stream.

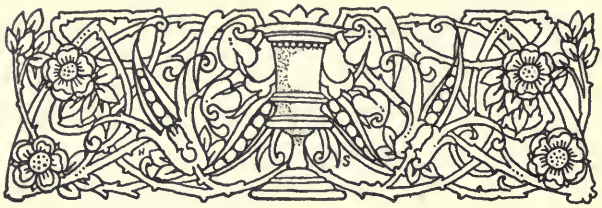
II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,
Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,
Nor essence nor eternal laws:
For nothing is, but all is made.
But if I dream that all these are,
They are to me for that I dream;
For all things are as they seem to all,
And all things flow like a stream.

Poems Published in the Edition of 1833, and Omitted in Later Editions

Sonnet

O BEAUTY, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!
How canst thou let me waste my youth in sighs?
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.
Thou knowest I dare not look into thine eyes.
Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare not fold
My arms about thee—scarcely dare to speak.
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,
As with one kiss to touch thy blessed cheek.
Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control
Within the thrilling brain could keep afloat
The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,
The bare word KISS hath made my inner soul
To tremble like a lutestring, ere the note
Hath melted in the silence that it broke.



The Hesperides

"Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree."—*Comus.*

THE North-wind fall'n, in the new-starred night
Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond
The hoary promontory of Soloë
Past Thymiaterion, in calmed bays,
Between the southern and the western Horn,
Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,
Nor melody of the Libyan lotus flute
Blown seaward from the shore; but from a slope
That ran bloom-bright into the Atlantic blue,
Beneath a highland leaning down a weight
Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar shade,
Came voices, like the voices in a dream,
Continuous, till he reached the outer sea.

The Hesperides

SONG

I

The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.
Round about all is mute,
As the snow-field on the mountain-peaks,
As the sand-field at the mountain-foot.
Crocodiles in briny creeks
Sleep and stir not: all is mute.
If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,
We shall lose eternal pleasure,
Worth eternal want of rest.
Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure
Of the wisdom of the West.
In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and three
(Let it not be preached abroad) make an awful mystery.
For the blossom unto threefold music bloweth;
Evermore it is born anew;
And the sap to threefold music floweth,
From the root
Drawn in the dark,
Up to the fruit,
Creeping under the fragrant bark,
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and thro'.
Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,

The Hesperides

Looking warily
Every way,
Guard the apple night and day,
Lest one from the East come and take it away.

II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, ever and aye,
Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.
Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight;
Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and races die;
Honour comes with mystery;
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
Number, tell them over and number
How many the mystic fruit-tree holds
Lest the red-combed dragon slumber
Rolled together in purple folds.
Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the golden apple be stol'n away,
For his ancient heart is drunk with overwatchings night and day,
Round about the hallowed fruit-tree curled—
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the wind, without stop,
Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
For he is older than the world.

The Hesperides

If he waken, we waken,
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
If he sleep, we sleep,
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
If the golden apple be taken,
The world will be overwise.
Five links, a golden chain, are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Bound about the golden tree.

III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, night
and day,
Lest the old wound of the world be healed,
The glory unsealed,
The golden apple stolen away,
And the ancient secret revealed.
Look from west to east along:
Father, old Himala weakens, Caucasus is bold and strong.
Wandering waters unto wandering waters call;
Let them clash together, foam and fall.
Out of watchings, out of wiles,
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
All things are not told to all.
Half-round the mantling night is drawn,
Purple fringed with even and dawn.
Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth morn.

The Hesperides

IV

Every flower and every fruit the redolent breath
Of this warm sea-wind ripeneth,
Arching the billow in his sleep;
But the land-wind wandereth,
Broken by the highland-steep,
Two streams upon the violet deep;
For the western sun and the western star,
And the low west-wind, breathing afar,
The end of day and beginning of night
Make the apple holy and bright;
Holy and bright, round and full, bright and blest,
Mellowed in a land of rest;
Watch it warily day and night;
All good things are in the west.
Till mid noon the cool east light
Is shut out by the tall hillbrow;
But when the full-faced sunset yellowly
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,
Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,
Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
The world is wasted with fire and sword,
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.
Five links, a golden chain are we,
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
Daughters three,

The Hesperides

Bound about
The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit,
Guard it well, guard it warily,
Watch it warily,
Singing airily,
Standing about the charmed root.

Rosalind

[Perhaps the following lines may be allowed to stand as a separate poem; originally they made part of the text, where they were manifestly superfluous.]

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
Is one of those who know no strife
Of inward woe or outward fear;
To whom the slope and stream of Life,
The life before, the life behind,
In the ear, from far and near,
Chimeth musically clear.
My falcon-hearted Rosalind,
Full-sailed before a vigorous wind,
Is one of those who cannot weep
For others' woes, but overleap
All the petty shocks and fears
That trouble life in early years,

Rosalind

With a flash of frolic scorn
And keen delight, that never falls
Away from freshness, self-upborne
With such gladness as, whenever
The fresh-flushing springtime calls
To the flooding waters cool,
Young fishes, on an April morn,
Up and down a rapid river,
Leap the little waterfalls
That sing into the pebbled pool.
My happy falcon, Rosalind,
Hath daring fancies of her own,
Fresh as the dawn before the day,
Fresh as the early sea-smell blown
Through vineyards from an inland bay.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
Because no shadow on you falls,
Think you hearts are tennis-balls
To play with, wanton Rosalind?

Song

WHO can say
Why To-day
To-morrow will be yesterday?
Who can tell
Why to smell
The violet recalls the dewy prime
Of youth and buried time?
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

Sonnet

Written on Hearing of the Outbreak of the Polish Insurrection

BLOW ye the trumpet, gather from afar
The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;
Break through your iron shackles—fling them far.
O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar
Grew to his strength among his deserts cold;
When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled
The growing murmurs of the Polish war!
Now must your noble anger blaze out more
Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before—
Than when Zamoysky smote the Tartar Khan;
Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

O Darling Room

I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,
Dear room, the apple of my sight,
With thy two couches soft and white,
There is no room so exquisite,
No little room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
Musical Lurlei; and between
The hills to Bingen have I been,
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

O Darling Room

III

Yet never did there meet my sight,
In any town to left or right,
A little room so exquisite,
With two such couches soft and white,
Not any room so warm and bright,
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

To Christopher North

YOU did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher.
When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher.

Other Discarded and Uncollected Poems

On Cambridge University

THEREFORE your Halls, your ancient Colleges,
Your portals statued with old kings and queens,
Your gardens, myriad-volumed libraries,
Wax-lighted chapels, and rich carven screens,
Your doctors and your proctors, and your deans
Shall not avail you, when the Daybeam sports
New-risen o'er awaken'd Albion—No!
Nor yet your solemn organ-pipes that blow
Melodious thunders thro' your vacant courts
At morn and eve—because your manner sorts
Not with this age wherefrom ye stand apart—
Because the lips of little children preach
Against you, you that do profess to teach
And teach us nothing, feeding not the heart.

No More

O SAD *No More!* O sweet *No More!*
O strange *No More!*
By a mossed brook-bank on a stone
I smelt a wildweed flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes gushed out with tears.
Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
Low-buried fathom deep beneath with thee, No More!

Anacreontics

WITH roses musky-breathed,
And drooping daffodilly,
And silver-leaved lily,
And ivy darkly-wreathed,
I wove a crown before her,
For her I love so dearly,
A garland for Lenora.
With a silken cord I bound it.
Lenora, laughing clearly
A light and thrilling laughter,
About her forehead wound it,
And loved me ever after.

A Fragment

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which stood
In the midnoon the glory of old Rhodes,
A perfect Idol with profulgent brows
Far-sheening down the purple seas to those
Who sailed from Mizraim underneath the star
Named of the Dragon—and between whose limbs
Of brassy vastness broad-blown Argosies
Drave into haven? Yet endure unscathed
Of changeful cycles the great Pyramids
Broad-based amid the fleeting sands, and sloped
Into the slumberous summer noon; but where,
Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks
Graven with gorgeous emblems undiscerned?
Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the Nile?
Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,
Awful Memnonian countenances calm
Looking athwart the burning flats, far off
Seen by the high-necked camel on the verge

A Fragment

Journeying southward? Where are thy monuments
Piled by the strong and sunborn Anakim
Over their crowned brethren On and Oph?
Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips are kist
With earliest rays, that from his mother's eyes
Flow over the Arabian bay, no more
Breathes low into the charmed ears of morn
Clear melody flattering the crisped Nile
By columned Thebes. Old Memphis hath gone down:
The Pharaohs are no more: somewhere in death
They sleep with staring eyes and gilded lips,
Wrapped round with spiced cerements in old grots
Rock-hewn and sealed for ever.

Sonnet

ME my own fate to lasting sorrow doometh:
Thy woes are birds of passage, transitory:
Thy spirit, circled with a living glory,
In summer still a summer joy resumeth.
Alone my hopeless melancholy gloometh,
Like a lone cypress, through the twilight hoary,
From an old garden where no flower bloometh,
One cypress on an island promontory.
But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,
As round the rolling earth night follows day:
But yet thy lights on my horizon shine
Into my night, when thou art far away.
I am so dark, alas! and thou so bright,
When we two meet there 's never perfect light.

Sonnet

CHECK every outflash, every ruder sally
Of thought and speech; speak low, and give
up wholly
Thy spirit to mild-minded Melancholy;
This is the place. Through yonder poplar alley
Below the blue-green river windeth slowly;
But in the middle of the sombre valley
The crisped waters whisper musically,
And all the haunted place is dark and holy.
The nightingale, with long and low preamble,
Warbled from yonder knoll of solemn larches,
And in and out the woodbine's flowery arches
The summer midges wove their wanton gambol,
And all the white-stemmed pinewood slept above—
When in this valley first I told my love.

Sonnet

THERE are three things which fill my heart with sighs,
And steep my soul in laughter (when I view
Fair maiden-forms moving like melodies)—
Dimples, roselips, and eyes of any hue.
There are three things beneath the blessed skies
For which I live—black eyes and brown and blue:
I hold them all most dear; but oh! black eyes,
I live and die, and only die in you.
Of late such eyes looked at me—while I mused,
At sunset, underneath a shadowy plane,
In old Bayona nigh the southern sea—
From an half-open lattice looked at *me*.
I saw no more—only those eyes—confused
And dazzled to the heart with glorious pain.

The Skipping-Rope

SURE never yet was antelope
Could skip so lightly by.
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
Will hit you in the eye.
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!
How fairy-like you fly!
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
And hang yourself thereby.

The New Timon and the Poets

WE know him, out of Shakespeare's art,
And those fine curses which he spoke;
The old Timon, with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old: here comes the New.
Regard him: a familiar face:
I thought we knew him: What, it 's you,
The padded man—that wears the stays—

Who killed the girls and thrilled the boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote!
A Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too;
You failed, Sir: therefore now you turn,
To fall on those who are to you
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,
  And careless what this hour may bring,
Can pardon little would-be POPES
  And BRUMMELS, when they try to sting.

An Artist, Sir, should rest in Art,
  And waive a little of his claim;
To have the deep poetic heart
  Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please;
  You never look but half content;
Nor like a gentleman at ease,
  With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,
  You cannot let a body be:
It 's always ringing in your ears,
  "They call this man as good as *me*."

What profits now to understand
  The merits of a spotless shirt—
A dapper boot—a little hand—
  If half the little soul is dirt?

You talk of tinsel! why, we see
  The old mark of rouge upon your cheeks.
You prate of Nature! you are he
  That spilt his life about the cliques.

The New Timon and the Poets

A Timon you! Nay, nay, for shame:
It looks too arrogant a jest—
The fierce old man—to take his name,
You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

Lines

HERE often, when a child I lay reclined,
I took delight in this locality.
Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,
And here the Grecian ships did seem to be.
And here again I come, and only find
The drain-cut levels of the marshy lea,—
Grey sea-banks and pale sunsets,—dreary wind,
Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-clouded sea!

Stanzas

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,
One of the shining winged powers,
Show'd me vast cliffs with crown of towers.

As towards the gracious light I bow'd,
They seem'd high palaces and proud,
Hid now and then with sliding cloud.

He said, "The labour is not small;
Yet winds the pathway free to all:—
Take care thou dost not fear to fall!"

Britons, Guard Your Own

RISE, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead;
The world's last tempest darkens overhead;
The Pope has bless'd him;
The Church caress'd him;
He triumphs; maybe we shall stand alone.
Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plunder'd gold,
By lying priests the peasants' votes controll'd.
All freedom vanish'd,
The true men banish'd,
He triumphs; maybe we shall stand alone.
Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we—sweet Peace we all desire—
Peace-lovers we—but who can trust a liar?—
Peace-lovers, haters
Of shameless traitors,
We hate not France, but this man's heart of stone.
Britons, guard your own.

Britons, Guard Your Own

We hate not France, but France has lost her voice.
This man is France, the man they call her choice.
By tricks and spying,
By craft and lying,
And murder was her freedom overthrown.
Britons, guard your own.

"Vive l'Empereur" may follow by and by;
"God save the Queen" is here a truer cry.
God save the Nation,
The toleration,
And the free speech that makes a Briton known.
Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is captive France,
The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on his chance,
Would, unrelenting,
Kill all dissenting,
Till we were left to fight for truth alone.
Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan tides,
To blow the battle from their oaken sides.
Why waste they yonder
Their idle thunder?
Why stay they there to guard a foreign throne?
Seamen, guard your own.

Britons, Guard Your Own

We were the best of marksmen long ago,
We won old battles with our strength, the bow.
Now practise, yeomen,
Like those bowmen,
Till your balls fly as their true shafts have flown.
Yeomen, guard your own.

His soldier-ridden Highness might incline
To take Sardinia, Belgium, or the Rhine:
Shall we stand idle,
Nor seek to bridle
His rude aggressions, till we stand alone?
Make their cause your own.

Should he land here, and for one hour prevail,
There must no man go back to bear the tale:
No man to bear it—
Swear it! we swear it!
Although we fight the banded world alone,
We swear to guard our own.

Additional Verses

To "God Save the Queen!" written for the marriage of the Princess Royal of England with the Crown Prince of Prussia, January 25, 1858.

GOD bless our Prince and Bride!
God keep their lands allied,
God save the Queen!
Clothe them with righteousness,
Crown them with happiness,
Them with all blessings bless,
God save the Queen!

Fair fall this hallow'd hour,
Farewell, our England's flower,
God save the Queen!
Farewell, first rose of May!
Let both the peoples say,
God bless thy marriage-day,
God bless the Queen!

The War

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens the day!
Storm of battle and thunder of war!
Well if it do not roll our way.
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen, form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns!
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of thorns?
How should a despot set men Free?
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen, form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!
Look to your butts, and take good aims!

The War

Better a rotten borough or so
Than a rotten fleet or a city in flames!
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen, form!

Form, be ready to do or die!
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!
True that we have a faithful ally,
But only the devil can tell what he means.
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen, form!

The Ringlet

I

"YOUR ringlets, your ringlets,
That look so golden-gay,
If you will give me one, but one,
To kiss it night and day,
Then never chilling touch of Time
Will turn it silver-grey;
And then shall I know it is all true gold
To flame and sparkle and stream as of old,
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,
And all her stars decay."
"Then take it, love, and put it by;
This cannot change, nor yet can I."

"My ringlet, my ringlet,
That art so golden-gay,
Now never chilling touch of Time
Can turn thee silver-grey;

The Ringlet

And a lad may wink, and a girl may hint,
  And a fool may say his say;
For my doubts and fears were all amiss,
And I swear henceforth by this and this,
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,
  And a fear to be kiss'd away."
"Then kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I."

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  I kiss'd you night and day,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  You still are golden-gay,
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  You should be silver-grey;
For what is this which now I 'm told,
I that took you for true gold,
She that gave you 's bought and sold,
    Sold, sold.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  She blush'd a rosy red,
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  She clipt you from her head,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
  She gave you me, and said,

The Ringlet

"Come, kiss it, love, and put it by:
If this can change, why so can I."
O fie, you golden nothing, fie,
You golden lie.

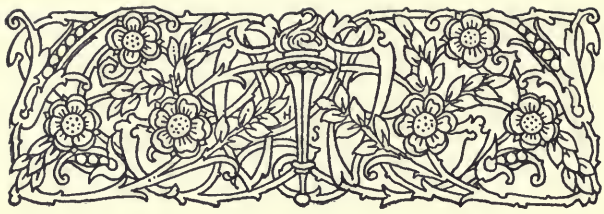
O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I count you much to blame,
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You put me much to shame,
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I doom you to the flame.
For what is this which now I learn
Has given all my faith a turn?
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,
Burn, burn.

Lines

LONG as the heart beats life within her breast,
Thy child will bless thee, guardian mother mild,
And far away thy memory will be blest
By children of the children of thy child.

1865—1866

I STOOD on a tower in the wet,
And New Year and Old Year met,
And winds were roaring and blowing,
And I said, "O years that meet in tears,
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?
Science enough and exploring,
Wanderers coming and going,
Matter enough for deploring,
But aught that is worth the knowing?"
Seas at my feet were flowing,
Waves on the shingle pouring,
Old Year roaring and blowing,
And New Year blowing and roaring.

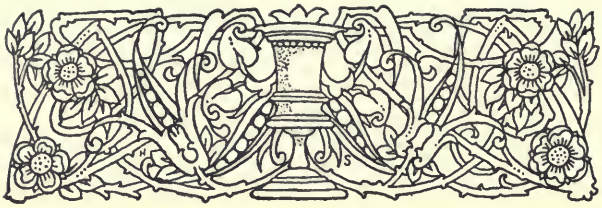


Stanza

NOT he that breaks the dams, but he
That thro' the channels of the State
Convoys the people's wish, is great;
His name is pure, his fame is free.

Compromise

STEERSMAN, be not precipitate in thy act
Of steering, for the river here, my friend,
Parts in two channels, moving to one end.
This goes straight forward to the cataract,
That streams about the bend;
But tho' the cataract seem the nearer way,
Whate'er the crowd on either bank may say,
Take thou the bend, 't will save thee many a day.



Experiment in Sapphic Metre

FADED every violet, all the roses;
Gone the glorious promise, and the victim
Broken in the anger of Aphrodite
Yields to the victor.

THE night with sudden odour reel'd,
The southern stars a music peal'd,
Warm beams across the meadow stole;
For Love flew over grove and field,
Said, "Open, Rosebud, open, yield
Thy fragrant soul."

WE lost you for how long a time,
True Pearl of our poetic prime!
We found you, and you gleam reset
In Britain's lyric coronet.

Crossing the Bar

[This poem, although belonging to the volume *Demeter*, etc., is placed here in accordance with Lord Tennyson's request that it be put at the end of every edition of his works.]

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

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